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Reginald Pecock's Book of
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THE BOOK OF FAITH
BY REGINALD PECOCK
BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

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REGINALD PECOCK'S

BOOK OF FAITH

A Fifteenth Century Theological Tractate

EDITED FROM THE MS.

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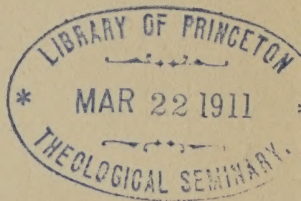
WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

BY

✓
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PREFACE

PECOCK'S *Book of Faith* exists in a unique, imperfect manuscript in Trinity College Library, Cambridge (B. 14. 45). Along with several other English religious works of the fifteenth century, it was included in Whitgift's benefactions to the college library; and it bears his arms on the binding. According to Dr. James,¹ it is written in a hand of the early fifteenth century, and contains many marginal notes, some of them almost as early as the manuscript itself. It consists of 127 ff., very clearly written, although the scribe has been by no means perfect in his transcription. Two folios in the second octave are missing, and many at the end—we know that at least two chapters are gone. Imperfect as it is, sufficient still remains to make it, along

¹ *Catalogue of the Western MSS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (1900). By M. R. James, i. 452-3.

with the *Represser*, the most important contribution to English theological thought between Wycliffe and the Tudor writers; and even had this not been so, the book has had a history interesting enough to justify publication.

There can be little doubt that it was Pecock's last completed work. In his prologue, the author mentions the *Represser* as of six years' standing, and in exact accordance with this time, as Waterland was the first to notice, 'speaking of the same war between England and France, he sets it at forty years in this book, as he had in the *Represser* at thirty-four.'¹ It is true, as Babington has noted,² that there are two references to the *Book of Faith* in the *Represser*; a fact which, under ordinary circumstances, would seem to make it at least as early as the other work. But a knowledge of Pecock's literary methods makes this inference unnecessary. Babington explains the cross reference by pointing to the author's habit of working at several volumes coincidently: 'Pecock seems to have had several works half finished at the same time, which afterwards came out at different times; and thus one

¹ Waterland's *Works*, (ed. Oxford, 1823), vol. x. p. 214.

² *The Represser* (Rolls Series), p. xxxiii.

book may be referred to in another book, which itself came out earlier than the book to which it refers.¹ But I should go further, and claim that the actual references in the *Represser* are the surest evidence of a very late date for the *Book of Faith*. Both references are on erasures in the Cambridge manuscript of the *Represser*. Now, that manuscript was the copy used at Pecock's examination, and was revised, along with other volumes, by its author,² late in 1457. It is not extravagant to believe that the numerous erasures and corrections, in two of which the *Book of Faith* is mentioned, were made when Pecock was bringing his volume up to date for the trial. So it would happen that he could refer precisely to a volume only recently completed, and which had previously existed, if at all, only in idea. No doubt Pecock, in the same passage in which he speaks of the *Represser* as six years old, also says that 'it is not zitt into this present day utterly into uce delyvered ;'³ but in the author's sense, the *Represser* remains to-day in that condition—it is an unfinished argument. I take it that the *Book*

¹ *The Represser*, p. xxxiii.

² Gascoigne, in *Loci e Libro Veritatum* (ed. Rogers), p. 211.

³ *The Book of Faith*, the Prologue.

of *Faith* is, by a full six years, later than the *Represser*, and if we accept Babington's date of 1449, or at latest 1450, for the latter, the *Book of Faith* may be placed somewhere about 1456.

This date accords well with the earliest history of the book. Gascoigne makes it plain that the treatise *de Fide* figured prominently in the days of Pecock's trial, and so long as the case held public attention. It is hardly rash to say that his references suggest the excitement created by the recent publication of unsound views. In 1457 it was recent enough to be still unread by him; he has heard of its teachings; he takes other men's word for its contents.¹ Still, whether through actual acquaintance, or through rumour, the treatise bulks more largely in Gascoigne's mind than any of Pecock's other works. He states its propositions with fulness and accuracy, and in his latest reference gives chapter and verse: 'the aforesaid bishop Pecok, in his book *de Fide*, part the second, chapter five, says that the Subtle Doctor was deceived when he declared Christ's descent into hell to be an article of faith.'² The peculiar prominence held by the book in Gas-

¹ *Loci e Libro Veritatum*, pp. 99, 100.

² *Ibid.* p. 210.

coigne's mind is the result, on the one side, it seems to me, of its recent appearance; on the other, of the great importance of the doctrines it contains. In spite of the greater mass of detail in the *Represser*, and its value as a historical document, that book held no superiority of interest until Babington's edition, in the Rolls Series, made it Pecock's representative work. It may be of interest to trace first-hand knowledge of the *Book of Faith*, and use made of it, down to the nineteenth century.

Bale must have seen it, for in his catalogue of Pecock's works he quotes (with a slight error) its opening words: 'Filii mei perdit, etc.'¹ Of Foxe, we can only say that his knowledge of our author seems to have been acquired from external sources, such as Gascoigne; but the later sixteenth century is represented by Whitgift, who was interested sufficiently in the manuscript to possess it, and present it to Trinity College; and it is possible that one of the titles, scribbled on the first pages of the manuscript, was from the hand of Stowe. When Henry Wharton desired, at the end of the seventeenth century, to demonstrate that 'even in later ages it was the commonly

¹ Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum* (ed. Poole), p. 338.

received opinion of the Church that Scripture is the Rule of Faith,' he turned to the Trinity College manuscript, and his partial transcript, carelessly rendered, and used for purposes which the author would hardly have approved, is the first modern contribution to our knowledge of Pecock's opinions.¹ A little later, Waterland and Lewis made ample use of the same manuscript. Lewis, indeed, probably did not handle it, although he seems to have read Wharton's extracts;² but Waterland, who gave him most of his first-hand material for his 'Life,' transcribed considerable portions, and enabled him to quote the manuscript as one of his main authorities.³ Tanner mentions it in his *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica*,⁴ referring to the Trinity manuscript and Wharton's transcript, although his language hardly suggests that he had seen the former. And, to pass at a leap to the nineteenth century, Babington's work on

¹ *A treatise proving scripture to be the rule of faith, writ by R. Peacock about the year 1458* [with a preface by Henry Wharton], London, 1688. There are copies of Wharton's book in Trinity College Library, Cambridge, and in the Bodleian.

² Lewis, *The Life of the Learned and Right Reverend Reynold Pecock, S.T.P.* (1744).

³ Waterland's *Works*, vol. x. *passim*.

⁴ p. 584.

the *Represser* reveals a knowledge of the present treatise almost as complete as that possessed of the text he was editing. When one remembers that all this knowledge and interest depended on a single imperfect manuscript, the inherent importance of the book becomes more obvious. It is strange that an editor has not appeared at an earlier date; the more so since prospective editors have a cordial assurance of their author's good will, and some share in a blessing bestowed four hundred and fifty years ago: 'Wel were the man,' says Pecock of the multiplication of his books by others, 'which hadde rieches and wolde spende it into this so greet goostli almes, which passith ful myche the delyng abroad of clothes to greet multitude of pore persoonys, notwithstanding that bothe kyndis of almes ben good.'

The aim and methods of the present edition demand some explanation. The work was originally undertaken as part of a more ambitious scheme, dealing with opinion in England prior to the Elizabethan Renaissance; and I have never ceased to regard my work as part of that larger whole. It seemed desirable to set in print a book so important in the development of English theo-

logical opinion. The first object, therefore, was a complete text. The spelling of the manuscript, with all its variations, has been retained, except in cases of obvious absurdity, and with this modification that 'þ,' used by the scribe without any special significance, has been changed into the modern symbol. The punctuation is entirely my own, and may not escape criticism; but the author's style is so involved and his sentences and paragraphs so interminable, that some attempt at exegesis through punctuation seemed to be called for. As a matter of fact, this is the only form of annotation which I have attempted, apart from some few bare textual explanations. The nature of the subject-matter must render notes an irritant to the mind closely engaged in following the author's argument; and such historical or philosophical information as may be necessary can be better supplied in other ways. A table of authorities quoted in the treatise has been compiled; and an elementary glossary, for those who may stumble, here and there, at a strange word or form. I am very conscious that the introductory essay may be regarded as unnecessarily general, but, as has been explained above, this general relation of Pecock to the development of

English thought seems the most solid reason for the publication of the treatise, and the point of view least emphasised in the work of earlier students of the man. I wish, therefore, the text and the essay to appear as an introductory chapter to the history of the earlier English Renaissance.¹

It gives me pleasure to mention those who, through their kindness, have made this work possible. I have to thank the Council of Trinity College for their generosity in granting me permission to publish the manuscript, and to use the resources of their noble library. To the Reverend Dr. Sinker and to Mr. W. W. Greg, the Librarians during the period of my work, I owe a special debt of gratitude. Dr. Sinker received me with a courtesy which meant very much to my work, and I shall not readily forget his suggestions and his encouragement during my visits to Cambridge. To all the officials in the Library I wish to communicate my thanks.

Equally with these, I am indebted to my

¹To the authorities upon Pecoek's writings should now be added the long discussion in Dr. Gairdner's important work, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (1908), vol. i. pp. 202-242.

friends, Mr. Kenneth Leys, of Glasgow University, Mr. James MacLehose, and Mr. F. M. Powicke, of Manchester University, for services which have made publication easy and pleasant to one who will be distant some thousands of miles from his printers during the later stages of his work.

J. L. MORISON.

INNELLAN, ARGYLLSHIRE, *August*, 1908.

REGINALD PECOCK :

AN ESSAY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
FIFTEENTH CENTURY OPINION

REGINALD PECOCK :

AN ESSAY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY OPINION

I

THE ECCLESIASTICAL POINT OF VIEW

‘IN the name of the holy Trinity, Father, and Sonn, and Holy Ghost, I Raynold Peacock, bishopp of Chycester unworthy, of mine own pure and free will, without any man’s cohertion or dread, confess and acknowledge, that I here before time presuming of mine own natural witt, and preferring the judgment of naturall reason before the New and Old Testaments, and the authority and determination of our moder holy church, have holden, felyd, written, and taught otherwise, then the holy Romane and universal church teacheth, preacheth, and observeth. . . . And on this to declaration of my commission, and repentance, I here openly assent, that my said books, works, and writings, for consideration and cause above rehearsed, be deputed unto the

fire, and openly be burnt, into the example and terror of all other.'¹ In the words of this recantation the career of the only great English theologian of the fifteenth century ended. The shame which naturally attaches to a surrender, the industry of very bitter personal enemies, and a fate ironically adverse, have too long obscured from view the extraordinary interest attaching to the career of Reginald Pecock, doctor of the University of Oxford, bishop of Chichester, and the author of volumes, once offering a fair system of rational divinity, now existing in some few scattered manuscripts, a little gleaned from the fires which their author barely escaped. It is true that handbooks make correct references to the trial which extinguished him, and that his *Represser* has furnished rich spoil to the philologist, but of the moderns, Lewis and Babington² alone have given an adequate account

¹ Wilkins' *Concilia*, vol. iii. p. 576.

² *The Life of the Learned and Right Reverend Reynold Pecock, S.T.P.*, etc., by John Lewis, Minister of Mergate, collected and written in 1725, and now reviewed. London, 1744. *The Represser*. Edited by Churchill Babington. London, 1860. I shall spell the title of this book after Pecock's own fashion, and write it *Represser* throughout this essay. Vol. ii. of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* contains an interesting estimate of Pecock's literary work by Miss Greenwood.

of his personality, and there is still room for a reconstruction of the character, which each new slander of his enemies, or complacent self-appreciation in his own pages, sets before us with singular vividness.

It was Pecoek's misfortune that he lived at a time, and in a country, dead to the interests he had peculiarly at heart, for he was the Renaissance man in a land still content with its ancient ways and thoughts. It is customary to trace a growing inclination towards learning through the century in England, and to claim as signs of renascent intellect a few gifts of books to college libraries, the founding of some schools or colleges, and the wandering of a few English scholars into Italy to learn Greek. As if the schoolboy earnestness of a few excellent pedants, or the benefactions of a dilettante, could cause a national movement. It took the discovery of a new world, the menace of a national destruction, the creation of a brilliant court, and the evolution of a new experimental morality to awaken England to her intellectual destiny. For England is not easily moved. There is a temper most fitly described as Anglican, which from before the Conquest, had set England, a little continent by herself, in opposition even to the papal and imperial ideals

in their attempts to dominate nationality, and which, among the minor consequences of its operation in the fifteenth century, foiled Pecock through the long labours of some decades, and finally overwhelmed his rash attempt to erect mind into a position which only Italy was then prepared to grant it. There is a familiar tragic picture in literature of the hero wrestling with that vague monster, the Spirit of the Age, and being overcome; but never has the tragedy been so complete as when the fifteenth century church rose, in the strength of its dull wrath, and destroyed even the memory of Pecock's career.

England, then as now, was a land which acknowledged the fact more than the ideal. Immersed in detail, through which English statesmen and thinkers could vaguely see some form of progress, they were disinclined to move quickly or often. Fact had to adjust itself to fact; repeated small experiments must first justify change in detail, before any measure could advance, and stolidity was the natural English virtue. Precedent, too, had to play its part. Whether in church or state, Pecock's contemporaries abode by the *status quo*, and argued from it. The mere fact that ideas and institutions existed sufficed, and no practical politician or ecclesiastic dreamt of advance made otherwise

than by light reflected from the past. Parliament, under the Lancastrians, set the fashion of legal conservatism, which ruled unchecked, save by the need of occasionally readjusting means to end; and the reformer, who loves advances in great sweeping moves, found the case prejudiced against him by this association of wisdom with sober immobility. Still more obstructive of intellectual advances was the modified feudalism, which made English life rural rather than civic, and which, being the abrogation of self-consciousness in social relations, told everywhere against keen play of mind. But the peculiar intellectual notes of Lancastrian England are best revealed in such concrete examples as Fortescue's writings afford; with their sound apprehension of average English merits, their shrewd judgment on alien fact, based on the assumption that the Anglican standard must be the true criterion; their refusal to intrude individual idea into a fabric of thought and usage, sanctified by centuries of unthinking progress, and the exhibition of that Anglican piety which resorts to innovation only when the happy self-sufficiency of national conceit has been offended by alien church authorities. It is the spirit of a land given over to agriculture, with intervals of trade and war, but little inclined to foster the soul or the intellect. The student of

fifteenth century England must not allow himself to be misled by the stability and the national health, which underlay all its surface defects and strifes, and to forget its extreme insignificance in the history of intellectual development in Europe. Truth of proportion comes only when we set beside England and its sturdy, stupid standards, the intellectual illumination of contemporary Florence, with some man of action like Machiavelli to serve as prophet and summarize a century's gains and losses.¹ The Italian, basing his sceptical generalisations on a national practice which had been maturing for well-nigh a century, formulated a political philosophy to suit a land of cities; where communities governed themselves by consciously and suddenly developed constitutions, and where government overcame government by sheer force of mind. He spoke to men who were accustomed to judge things by that most intellectual of tests, their own enlightened self-interest; he was approved by rulers whose tyranny usually clothed itself in aesthetic and learned refinement, and by courtiers who forgot the loss of independence in the new joy of reviving letters, the pursuit of the arts, and

¹ In spite of Machiavelli's later date I choose him here for comparative purposes, because his practice and theory were both founded on fifteenth century facts.

the elaboration of a life where the senses, by their free play, gave new sharpness to the mind, and the mind by its consciousness of self-improvement, exaggerated the power of the senses. The Lancastrian Englishman, true to the national principle that God works while the farmer sleeps, preferred to leave to providence ideas wherein no surface cleverness could, in his eyes, atone for possible error, and was satisfied to know that means and end were adjusted for the next day's work, without looking for ulterior ideal justification. His land knew nothing of the life lived intellectually for the mere sake of intellect ; his rulers were warriors of antique mould, local potentates, immersed in hunting and parochial self-assertion ; his religion was a solid physical necessity of life, so entirely expressed in institutions, charities, churches and traditional usages, that only to those outside the pale of social or intellectual respectability did it suggest itself as a possible subject for intellectual criticism ; his educational system sought mainly to train a numerous clergy, and to educate men through those useful exercises which engage, without developing the mind, and that form of inquiry which never demands the appearance of a new fact, or feels the need of a temporary scepticism.

Pecock had to face this temper in its most

stubborn form. He was an ecclesiastic, and in England the world of ecclesiastical orthodoxy has ever been the last refuge for impossible antiquities. In the fifteenth century, English orthodoxy presented a picture of troubled quiescence, for the Anglican church was attempting a curious task. It had, on the whole, succeeded in defeating the great effort which Wycliffe had made, to attain progress by rational means. In spite of the almost purely national character of Wycliffe's primary doctrines, ecclesiastical conservatism had refused to alter one iota of its teachings. Theories of dominion, which flattered Anglican pride and played to suit the mood of Anglican feudalism, had done little more than attract a few discredited English land-owners; criticism of material mysteries which could be grasped in part by the crowd, had won disciples, whose vigorous, coarse onslaughts on the sacrament of the altar left the educated, and even the main body of the people, little troubled;¹ an honest appeal to Englishmen to study their religion in their own language had been too strenuously opposed from above to permit the growth of an independent mind in the lower classes. National religion was suffering from the most depressing of all disasters, the

¹ See *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, *passim*, for the unphilosophic framework of the Lollard views.

extinction of intellectual progress and moral enthusiasm; for the universities had made unconditional surrender to the church, and the possible leaders of religious advance had, one after another, chosen security at the expense of truth.¹

But while the one logical attack on the Papacy had been promptly checked, English churchmen could not afford to ignore papal exactions and misdeeds, nor were leaders like Hallam of Salisbury, or Beaufort of Winchester, willing to let England take any low place in the great councils which were attempting to heal the papal schism, unite the church in an orthodox faith, and abolish the more clamant of her abuses. On its more complaisant side, the English church, while it maintained the ancient splendours of its national tradition, sought to recover within its bounds the untainted purity of doctrine which had been its boast from the days when the Pelagian evil had been banished, down to the dawn of the Wycliffite heresies. It took its stand as the church orthodox, Roman, splendid in social stability, asserting a right to rank with the highest feudal potentate in that unquestioned unreflective custo-

¹ This inability of the chief Lollards to maintain their views to the end is one of the most definite conclusions suggested by Mr. G. M. Trevelyan in his admirable *England in the Age of Wycliffe*.

mary sway, the loss of which would mean derogation even from its spiritual correctness. But on another side it showed a vigorous element of protest. All agreed in excluding heresy, but some were resolute for reform. The higher dignitaries might acquiesce in Papal corruptions which left them with a share of the spoils, but, apart altogether from Parliaments which had a disinclination to provide for Italian pluralists, there seems to have been a goodly number of the school of Grosseteste, who cried to Rome to cease its injustice, and to cleanse the courts of the church. It was unfortunate for these reformers that their orthodoxy, unstained, had set them in the forefront of the attack on Wycliffite opinion, for there can be little doubt that the very evils which they attacked, were in part natural consequences of a great defeat that truth had sustained at their own hands.

The English church, then, to whose episcopate Pecock belonged, had this unwonted double aspect of stately orthodoxy and vigorous reform ; yet on either side there was an unquestioning agreement to defend the purity of doctrine. It was Pecock's singular misfortune that, throughout his career, he came into hostile contact with both parties in the church, and that while he offended the higher powers, he simultaneously provoked against him

the moral vigour of the purists, who represented the soundest traditions of English ecclesiastical and religious constitutionalism. In the last fight, which, as we shall see, brought his career to its shameful close, it was Reginald Pecock *contra mundum*, from the king and archbishop down to the very London mob; but through a piece of great good fortune there exist two detailed and vehement condemnations of the man, which display not merely his objective errors, but those two great currents of English opinion which he tried to stem, social caste acting as the regulator of religion, and righteous (perhaps self-righteous) orthodoxy.

One of these (if the envenomed account of Pecock's end contained in the St. Alban's Register be really the work of the Abbot Whethamstede) speaks of his exploits, from the standpoint of the great ecclesiastic, lashing them with a fury which cannot contain itself, and which breaks into scandalous and doggerel verse over the peacock 'deplumatus' and 'spoliatus.'¹ It is the voice of the abbey potentate, the possessor of broad acres, the inheritor of an ancient and peerless tradition; the constitutional churchman accustomed

¹ *Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede, Abbatis Monasterii Sancti Albani*, edited by H. T. Riley, M.A. (Rolls Series), vol. i. pp. 279-289.

to say to one man 'Go,' and to another 'Come,' and ignorant of the sound of dissent. What had so stable, so soundly unprogressive a force to do with clever reasonings on the faith? Christianity for the Abbot of St. Albans had come to mean the stable ordering of lands and moneys, the regular performance at stated hours of a noble ritual, the social distinction which attached to the heads of a great church organisation. Ideas in such a world were obviously misplaced, innovation was a sort of spiritual *lèse-majesté*, and the very suspicion of heresy set the suspected, not in any class of brilliant heresiarchs, but among those discreditable souls for whom is reserved the blackness of social darkness. In a land where bishops were mighty nobles, judging all things from the standpoint of aristocratic arrogance and immobility, and where mitred abbots were fellows rather of the patriarchs than of the apostles, a renaissance in intellectual dogma was an impossibility, for it required imagination, mental agility, and some smack of letters, qualities on whose front contemporary English opinion set the brand of Cain.

If this massive property-owning Christianity stood in the way of movement, no less so did the religion of the universities. Once on a time it had been possible to speculate at Oxford,

and among the most daring schoolmen English scholars had not been wanting. But the days of Occam and Wycliffe were over. Oxford at least had become the home of a cause, triumphant but lost. After a gallant fight and an utter defeat, her leaders had set their faces towards strict orthodoxy, and progressive thought had gone. The highest point that could now be reached was only a kind of acidulated righteousness which had coupled the law and the prophets with the college statutes, and had contrived to give the gospel exhortations something of the dry rigour which the regulations of a university carry with them. One may still trace in the letters of Millington,¹ first provost of King's College, Cambridge, and a valiant confuter of Pecock, the formal dyspeptic correctness which destroys thought even more effectually than sloth; and the pages of that Pharisaic prophet, Thomas Gascoigne,² reveal as nothing else does, the peculiarly excellent qualities which must have

¹ See an article on William Millington, by the Rev. G. Williams, B.D., in the *Cambridge Antiquarian Society Communications*, vol. i. pp. 287 *seq.*

² I use throughout, *Loci e libro veritatum* (Oxford, 1881), being a selection of passages from Gascoigne's *Theological Dictionary*, edited by J. E. Thorold Rogers. And in addition one finds significant references to Gascoigne in the Oxford

here and there adorned the fifteenth century English church, and the equally strong capacity, inherent in these very qualities, for preventing any broad uprising of the national religious spirit. To Gascoigne, religion and the church meant something infinitely more self-conscious and spiritual than it did either to Whethamstede or to Beaufort. He had no temptation to confuse religion with social position or domestic administration. Born of good family, educated at Oxford and honoured by her, he exhibited in pleasant combination the ways of a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian. Duty he followed with a loyalty almost fanatic, and the standards which guided his own conduct he applied as faithfully in his criticism of his fellow churchmen and their practice. It was a high sense of moral responsibility which led him to attack his fellow churchmen and Rome for serious delinquencies.¹ Rectors and bishops were abandoning their charges for pleasanter duties at court and town; religious

Historical Society's volumes of fifteenth century Oxford letters. The *Gladius Salomonis* of Bury might also be used to reveal contemporary opposition to Pecock; but I have preferred Gascoigne because he mingles criticism with so much valuable personal detail—valuable not the less because it is abusive.

¹ *Loci e libro veritatum, passim.*

foundations were gathering to themselves the revenues of parish churches regardless of the spiritual welfare of the people; sinners were finding easy ways to repentance and to acquiescence in their sins, through pardons and indulgences; at the root of all, the Roman curia, greedy for gold, shameless, insincere, deceiving even the Pope himself, was ruining the English church by its reservations and provisions and simoniac practices. It was hard for loyal churchmen to speak out, but they were not deaf to the call of duty, and Gascoigne spoke as hard words of Rome as ever Luther did. The college puritan, then, could exhibit a high spirit, an inflamed conscientiousness, and an outspoken courage on proper occasion. But if Gascoigne was at all typical, he was also a precisian, whose puritanism had little evangelic constructiveness in it. One may note in the querulous repetitions of his attack on Pecock, a bitterness which suggests petty lack of charity; and his pessimism revealed the weakness of a righteousness, whose only policy in the face of evil was to complain again. This college orthodoxy was afraid of spiritual liberty, and had little sympathy with a faith that faced the worst. Long acquaintance with the routine of academic life had given college rules and college precision too great

a place in the doctor's mind ; it is disappointing to find, in the midst of most righteous criticism, the carping questionings of a man who will have all things done decently and in order, even when virtue calls for haste, and to whom speculation is a temptation of the evil one. Virtue it is, but academic virtue, and the ways of the universe seldom conform to the regulations of the quadrangle.

I have tried to suggest features in that system of ecclesiastical thought and feeling which formed in its completeness a strong fabric of Anglican constitutionalism. From Beaufort, baron, general, diplomatist and churchman, at its head, down to the pettiest doctor who served his church by scholastic quibbles at some obscure college, there was firmness, some soundness, a vast capacity for resisting movement, and an overwhelming desire to extirpate whatever was novel in thought, word, or policy. Beside this engine of conservatism, in anxious attitude of defence, stood the state, equally resolute to maintain contact with the past, and regarding innovation in the church as treason against the king—a strong secular arm, bound not in spirit only but by law, to strike a blow for the ancient faith. And more generally, but still with enormous influence, there operated the unorganised chaos of fifteenth century English

opinion and temper ; uninspired, sluggish, and utterly unheroic. It was a world in which a martyr, with a great gospel and an undaunted courage, might have provoked a crisis, but it was hardly one in which new speculative culture could easily grow. The enthusiast, the crusader, the bold adventurer, each might have fought his way to power and influence, but mind, unassisted yet aspiring, could only look for failure. It was the intention of Reginald Pecock to give his church a new intellectual standpoint, to convince the people of error through their minds ; in short, to do for England, and in an English way, what the greater Italians were attempting with success in their own land. One must turn to his writings for the methods and doctrines of the new illumination ; to his life for the result.

II

PERSONAL FACTS¹

IT would be futile to reconstruct with any elaboration the details of a biography which Lewis and, more particularly, Babington have so completely investigated. But some attempt at a general outline must be made, for Pecock's writings are much more than the formulation of a revised religion; they are the expression of a highly individualised character. Apart altogether from the great interest of two or three events in his life, the personal revelations of one who was a hero among egoists ought to be brought to bear more definitely than they have yet been, upon the colder facts of history and the precise terms of a

¹ I have here utilised the ordinary materials of biography, helped very greatly by Lewis and Babington (*op. cit.*), but here and there I have tried to group facts in new ways, guided by the many personal references in the Pecock MSS. and the *Represser*. It seems to me that sufficient use has not been made, in this way, of the *Folewer to the Donet* (Brit. Mus., Bibl. Reg. 17 D. ix.) or of the *Book of Faith*.

logical philosophy, in both of which personality is really the unifying principle.

That he was of Welsh origin, the spite of Gascoigne's Saxon contempt for an 'episcopus Wallicus' leaves little doubt;¹ besides, some such racial fact is useful in explaining the shifty brilliance, the absence of calculation, and the refusal to ballast mind with something more grossly material, which characterise Pecock's every action. He was born somewhere about the end of the fourteenth century, and, whatever the nature of his schooling, his subsequent career conformed sufficiently to fifteenth century English ways to give him a commanding position among English churchmen. He was of the same Oxford College, Oriel, as his great enemy, Gascoigne, and had been for a time a Fellow, but he cannot have shared the opinions of his academic colleagues, for when he did proceed to a doctor's degree, it was, as Gascoigne sadly mourns, by dispensation, and without the fit and proper academic offices.² The truth seems to be that Pecock's intellect moved more rapidly and more ingeniously than did those of his solider rivals, and that Humphrey of

¹ There is of course, in addition, Leland's phrase, 'relicta Cambria, patrio solo' (*De Script. Brit.*), and Babington has set the point practically beyond possibility of doubt.

² *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 215.

Gloucester, keenly interested in the literary life, but more concerned with grace and novelty than with painful scholarship, and finding Pecock a man after his own heart, adopted him as one of his literary retainers, and so the Welsh scholar came to figure in a court circle. It is quite impossible to understand Pecock's career without a recognition of this relation of his to the court and a small court party of churchmen.¹ At least from 1431, when he found prosperity and work in London, his attitude was that of a man owning allegiance to a clique, and with enemies, some of them hostile to himself, but many enraged at the abuses connived at and shared in by a few court favourites.² Gascoigne has made it plain that Henry VI., pious and scholarly as his inclinations were, was not a wholesome influence in the Church. Other monarchs had been content to choose their chaplains from a rank lower than that of bishop—his great father had taken Thomas Netter of Walden, a simple theological doctor, as his spiritual adviser—but Henry of Windsor, for

¹ Leland, *De Script. Brit.* 'Accersitus ille, aulae et principi sic subserviebat,' etc.

² The best evidence for this is found, in the first place, in Gascoigne's reiterated statements; secondly and more conclusively, in Pecock's own statements and his whole attitude in the sermon at St. Paul's Cross.

one reason or another, preferred to draw bishops from their diocesan duties, at the very time when the common people were beginning to criticise the ways of English bishops. Round him he gathered, at one time or another, court divines like Stafford the archbishop, Moleyns of Chichester, Le Hert of Norwich, Bothe of Lichfield, and Pecock himself. How much Gloucester's initiative had to do with this work is uncertain, but it is significant that Pecock should have been regarded as one of his *protégés*,¹ and that Moleyns, like Humphrey, whose reputation for eloquence was European, not only had Italian correspondents, but had actually received congratulations on his style from no less a person than Aeneas Sylvius. One can see through the lamentations of Gascoigne the picture of a little circle of literary churchmen, who preferred rather to enjoy the pleasures and comfort of the court than the bleak rectitude of a round of duties faithfully performed in their own dioceses; men probably possessed of broader views than the puritanic scholars or the feudal bishops who envied or criticised their mode of life, but, consciously or unconsciously, contributing by lax discipline and too obtrusive selfishness to multiply the ecclesiastical evils of a decadent age. For these men the way to high

¹ Lewis (p. 4) on the authority of Leland.

position lay widely open, nor did the courtly influence confine itself to ecclesiastical appointments. The universities themselves had to pay tribute, for along with Pecock, whose doctorate must have been won by ducal if not royal solicitations, we hear of Master Vincent Clement, another of the circle, obtaining his degree 'minis et promissis,' and thrusting aside academic opposition by royal letters and writs.¹ The entire meaning of Pecock's notorious sermon, shortly to be examined, depends on his connection with this group, and his defence of them.

But Pecock, while he found court favour pleasant, was by no means an idler. Indeed, through all his works may be discerned that note of bustling self-importance, by which a busy literary man seeks to impress an ignorant public with the austerity of his labours. He may perhaps have seemed a little busier than he was, but the catalogue of his volumes in itself refutes any accusation of sloth. According to Gascoigne, writing at the time of his trial, Pecock had spent

¹ *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 28, 'Vincencio Clement, doctori insolenti, qui Oxoniae in theologia incepit in ordine diaconatus existens, gradu suo optento minis et promissis, et diversis litteris regiis et brevibus regiis missis contra eos qui in magna congregatione regencium et non regencium in Oxonia gratiam suam petitam ex sua consciencia negaverunt.'

twenty years in constant literary labours, and from his first arrival in London he was perhaps the most prolific writer in England. He was lucky in the moment of his advent to Whittington College and London, for he came at a time when Lollardism had been driven under cover, but when the middle and lower classes were everywhere voicing the criticisms, if not the doctrines of Wycliffe's disciples; and being a man of abnormal intellectual pugnacity and overweening intellectual self-confidence, he threw himself heart and soul into the work of refutation and apologetic. It is a curious fact that the Lollard views which he expounded so fully in the *Represser* bear the stamp rather of experimental and personal communication than of bookish dogma; and the most interesting page in the treatise now printed reveals not merely his methods with the Lollards, but even what must have been his way of life for many years in London. 'I have spoke oft tyme,' he writes, 'and bi long leiser, with the wittiest and kunnyngist men of thilk seid soort, contrarie to the chirche, and which han be holde as dukis amonge hem, and which han loved me for that y wolde pacientli heere her evydencis, and her motyves, without exprobracioun. And verrili noon of hem couthe make eny motyve for her parti so stronge as y my silf couthe have made

therto.¹ Like other keen reasoners he required an opponent to develop the highest powers of his mind, and so the contact of a London audience stimulated him into producing a series of volumes which, had he lived in freedom, would sooner or later have embraced every region of ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline.² His more potent volumes naturally came last, but before them he had discussed in literary form the rudiments of the moral law and of Christian psychology, the value of the fathers, the nature of the sacraments (on matrimony, at least, he considered that he had said the last word), and the limits of the creeds. It is very improbable that he ever took in hand a new translation of the Bible, but tradition paid tribute to the memory of his labours in reports of such a scheme. In any case, this court doctor and corrupt bishop succeeded, through sheer hard work, in winning for himself a reputation second to that of no contemporary theologian.

Nor was the work carelessly performed. In mere scholarship the author of the *Represser* was at least equal to the most learned of his English

¹ *Book of Faith*, f. 60^b ; below p. 202.

² Babington's bibliography, like everything else in his admirable edition of the *Represser*, is a triumph of patient and accurate scholarship.

contemporaries.¹ He may have lacked the reality and solidity of Wycliffe's reading, but, even after all deductions have been made, his list of authorities is striking. Two volumes or collections he knew through and through, the Bible and his own works. It is difficult to exaggerate the care with which he must have studied the former, whether in the recent English version or in the Vulgate. His biblical reading was no eclectic or dilettante matter, but embraced every book of scripture, even the most obscure; and while he frequently violates, as did all his contemporaries, modern laws of exegesis, he exhibits an extraordinary capacity for broad historic insight into its narrative, and shrewd rational explanation. Of his own works, one need only say here that they formed the study of his maturer years, and the touchstone in method and substance, by which he tried all his own later efforts, and criticised the feebleness of his opponents. For the rest, what there was in Latin of the fathers, he knew with such knowledge as an unscientific and unenthusiastic age might be expected to possess; the

¹ In compiling this brief account of Pecock's scholarship I have depended solely on the references in his books (I do not give detailed annotations). The most acute difficulty is that of distinguishing between what he had read for himself and what he used at third or fourth hand.

principal works of Augustine, Jerome, more particularly in connection with scripture, Ambrose, Gregory, and the authorities down to St. Bernard. His knowledge of ecclesiastical and imperial history, uncritical in our eyes, was at least respectable, and embraced the Christian era from the time of the apostles down to the great councils of his own time, with a competent understanding of Gratian and the canon law. He had, of course, been trained in the mediaeval schoolmen, and, while his reading in Wycliffe's own works seems to have been slight, presumably from lack of material in England, he knew the Wycliffite theories of dominion, and spoke, as with information, of 'the book of Wycliffe.'¹ Of Greek he must have known little more than the alphabet, if so much. At least three mistakes, impossible even to a beginner, reveal the tenuity of his information; for he fancies that Peter's Aramaic name is connected with κεφαλή, he explains orthodoxy etymologically as 'right glory,' and in a delightful combination of Chaucerian mediaevalism and pretentious error, he speaks of the 'ioustis and othere turnementis and maistries' celebrated at 'the hil Olympe.'² Aristotle, in spite of the occasional mention of definite titles, he seems to

¹ *The Represser*, p. 501.

² *The Folewer to the Donet*, f. 36^b.

have known very vaguely indeed, being by no means as learned as his greater predecessors, and suggesting by his vagueness that his quotations were obtained, not even from a mediaeval handbook of the philosopher, but from references in other men's writings. Of modern works, and general unedifying reading, it is dangerous to speak. He seems to have read Geoffrey of Monmouth; he may have known in part Giraldus Cambrensis, and, together with Wycliffe's theories, he was familiar with much of the serious writing of his own and the preceding century. Uncertainty increases as the world of lighter literature is reached. Apart from the character of his writings, so little likely to afford light here, one speedily becomes aware that Pecoock was a man fortified against humour, and therefore slow to feel the seductions of the imagination. He read and despised the legends of the saints (by a stroke of irony they were to form more than half the intellectual food permitted in his final confinement); he certainly knew the tales in which poor folk and children delighted, for he has a sneer against all fairy fancies, such as 'the opinion that three sisters (which were spirits) come to the cradilis of infantis forto sette to the babe what schal bifalle to him'; and a very rash biographer might imagine that when Pecoock illustrates the

power of pictorial representation by citing King Arthur, Julius Caesar, and Hector of Troie, he was drawing from the stock of Geoffrey Chaucer, and his fellow-poets.

To learning so considerable, Pecock added a capacity for taking pains. Gascoigne, who is often the unconscious witness of his opponent's merits, bears personal evidence to his painful correction and restatement. 'I have learned,' he says, 'that this bishop Reginald used through many years to write much, and that he afterwards cancelled with his own hand all that he had written, saying that his first efforts had been false and inept.' Theologians are not popularly supposed to be very open to conviction; and even among scientists, a willingness to correct mistakes is rare enough still to demand special praise.

Pecock, the controversialist, was certain to provoke opposition, the bitterer because the field of battle lay in the realm of letters. More particularly after his fellow-courtiers succeeded in gaining for him the bishopric of St. Asaph, he found hostile forces gathering against him. He was a successful man, and those who did not despise the means of his promotion, hated the success of a new man; he was ingenious in his apologetic labours, and to dull minds ingenuity is the worst of heresies; he was conceited, and men who had had their

longest-cherished opinions confuted, did not find their defeat softened by any modesty in their opponent. In his extant volumes Pecock everywhere exhibits the characteristics of a man who knew that he had bitter enemies, and that every word he wrote would be discussed in the narrowest spirit of criticism. Hostility is responsible to some extent for his most irritatingly sophistic habits of mind, and in almost all his writings he betrays a soreness, as of one over-conscious that injustice has been done to him. 'No man,' he concludes, in the *Folewer to the Donet*,¹ 'wite me though y speke and write so oft for my defensis; the malice of summe clerkis as y heere seie and sumwhat have felid, is so great azens me, that this and much more is litil ynou3 forto azenstonde it and forto assaie to make hem leve and ceese from it. I wolde thei took upon hem forto fynde and trace out a quarter of so hard a purpos as y do in myn Englisch and in myn Latyn writings; and thanne it schulde ful soon be seen that thei schulde have neid into supportyng and favoryng not oonli anentis her wordis and maner of speking, but also anentis the sentence which thei my3ten not denye to be of hem entendid and meenyd.'

Up to this point, Pecock had been a courtly

¹*F. to the D. f. 100.*

divine of some force and ingenuity, given to great intellectual activity, but hardly a national figure. Then came the excitement of a sermon at Paul's Cross in 1447, which won for him the uncomfortable fame of hatred; and thereafter, ten years of constant hard intellectual labour, of unceasing and ever increasing attack by embittered opponents, the publication of at least two great treatises, something like national notoriety, and a sudden and utter ruin. The sermon which first made Pecock's name notorious was a subtle defence of his clique, unsought on their part, because extremely undesirable. The honester part of the nation had become irritable on questions of church favouritism, non-residence and simoniac practices; and the disastrous weakness of the government was steadily involving all connected with it, and especially its court favourites, in disfavour. Men like Gascoigne, from puritanic motives, others from a desire to strike at Lancastrian prestige, were everywhere inveighing against the courtly bishops whose bargains with the king and with Rome were a national byword, and whose absence from duty had long been the subject of strong protests. To Pecock, if his are the arguments attached to the Latin summary¹ of

¹ *The Represser* (Rolls Series), p. 615. *Abbreviatio Reginaldi Pecok*, being a vindication of his sermon at Paul's Cross.

his sermon, the situation was evil for many reasons. The public character of the bishops was steadily depreciating under the storm of criticism levelled at their supposed deficiencies, and the laity, honey-combed already with Lollardy, were ceasing to retain any reverence for the episcopal office. Pecock, had he had in him a particle of humour, might have known that silence was infinitely the safest cure for the trouble. But he had none, and he had yet to learn the limits of the intellect in political and ecclesiastical warfare. So he justified the bishops in seven startling paradoxes, which brought down national indignation on his own head, and kindled fresh wrath against the objects of his solicitude. His justification of simony is too gratuitously extravagant to be regarded as anything but a Celtic exhibition of mental gymnastics; but the main position lay in a subtle sophism such as the man loved. Bishops, argued their defender, were men confronted by great and difficult duties; and preaching in the ordinary acceptation of the term, and as abused by those 'clamatores in pulpitis' whom he despised, was the lowest energy of the spiritual understanding, a kind of moral buffoonery played to a degraded gallery. Yet this, and not the sound exposition of Scripture which Pecock himself admired, was what the

crowd demanded. He was objecting, not so much to preaching, as to popular preaching. But even if popular taste had been more enlightened, there were, nevertheless, many reasons for excusing bishops from pulpit duties. As statesmen, they had weighty political questions to solve; as scholars they had to administer, not merely to laymen, but also to their lower clergy, of the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom; as holders of the episcopal office they were stewards of an estate where legal, administrative, and spiritual duties combined to burden those whom Apostolic unction left still mere men.¹ With a statement of the problem so reasonably conceived, Pecock expected that questions of non-residence, laxity of formal law, and unwillingness to preach, would sink into nothingness before the admiration excited by his picture of strenuous episcopacy. Of his good faith there can be no doubt whatever; for Gascoigne, who seems to have gained his information in part from no less a person than Pecock's private chaplain,² concedes that Pecock's real attack was directed against the

¹ For the sermon, see the *Abbreviatio*, Gascoigne *passim* in the Pecock tirades, and Pecock himself, especially in the *Folewer* (see below). Lewis deals fully with the adventure.

² *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 35, 'ut michi dixit suus Capellanus Magister Johannes Orle.'

popular and sensational preaching of the day, not against the sound exposition of Scripture and church doctrine, of which he was himself a master. Unfortunately the nation failed to respond except in new and more heated remonstrance.

One fancies that Pecock's unwilling *protégés* must have cursed their defender roundly ; at any rate the doctors and the crowd combined to declare themselves with plainness. In page after page of eloquent querulosities, that fifteenth century Jeremiah, Gascoigne, bewails with tearful menace the sinfulness of the new bishop's message. This, more than aught else, must have stimulated the ferocious disdain of Whethamstede; and of the popular feeling on the matter we have, luckily enough, an account from Pecock himself. Illustrating some question in casuistry dealt with in his *Folewer to the Donet*, he cites the case of a preacher, too obviously himself, and from his words we can understand something of the fury with which the populace heard him. 'Fadir,' says the son in the dialogue, 'y wiste whanne a precher, thenkyng that need was forto reprove mysberyng prechers, warnede summe of his felawschip that he wolde preche into the now seid entent and otherwise than he ever prechid bifore ; and also, for his purpos for the tyme of him entended was other than eny purpos into which he

prechid bifore, and for that he wolde be the bettir conceyvyd and undirstonde of the heerers in his spekyng and demenyng anentis his entent and purpos, he made a long antetheme undir declaracioun of these wordis of Poul to bisshop Timothie, "Argue, obsecra, increpa, emenda in omni paciencia et doctrina," forto justify that a precher may blame, undirneme and rebuke. . . . But what for al this so preciose and so deliciose bifore seid in the antitheme, whanne he procedid to the bodi and substaunce and cors of his sermoun, under this theme, "Amici mei et proximi mei adversum me appropinquaverunt et steterunt," in undirnemeng and blaming certain prechers, and that for as mych as he wolde that his werk schulde take effect, he did it scharpli and not without profis therto brouȝt, the peple, for what causis both god and wys men knowen wel ynouȝ, bure hem anentis the seid precher as wylde unresonable beestis in many kyndis crueli, unmanli, uncurteisli and untrewli, with contynuaunce of long tyme.'¹ There is something pathetic in the sight of so much cleverness and intentions so very good, thus misapplied; but conceit complicated by lack of humour contrived not only to plunge Pecoek into a discreditable controversy from which he never recovered, but blinded him

¹ *Folewer to the Donet*, f. 47.

so that to the end he thought the laurels still remained with him. In 1449 he was reviving popular and academic ire by fresh statements of his position ; and six years after the Paul's Cross sermon, he boasted, in a sober volume, that the conclusions which he had drawn up after the first encounter had never been refuted.¹ If wisdom is justified of her children, argument, blind herself, leads her devotees through peril to ruin. The pity of it is that the details of his once fierce dispute should seem so incredibly trivial, for it marked one of the great crises in Pecock's history. It was of immense moment both to the preacher and to his foes ; to Pecock himself it was, had he only known it, the last hour of stable elevation in his life. In the ten years which lay between this first baiting of the crowd and their final vengeance, many victories were to be won by spirited dialectic, and there were fresh steps of promotion, but it was all a vain show. Whether as reward for his paradoxes, or merely in recognition of his abilities, the Court faction secured another step in promotion for the bishop of St. Asaph. As both

¹ *Folewer to the Donet*, f. 49, 'And y wolde wite what clerk wole take upon him forto answere to the proofis of hem. For no clerk zit hidirto into this present day, bi more than vi zeer passid aftir the bigynnyng of the stryf durste take upon him forto answere to the proofis of hem.'

Whethamstede and Gascoigne inform us, he became bishop of Chichester in 1450, backed by at least one member of the old clique, Le Hert of Norwich, and by the unhappy Duke of Suffolk. It is strange to find this quondam ally of Gloucester now supported by de la Pole, the man to whom all partizans of Humphrey attributed his death. But, apart from certain political opinions which he and Suffolk must have shared, Pecock, in practical life, was probably one of those obsequious men of genius, who win the favour of busy men by flattering worldly force at the expense of their own intellect; and besides there was the common ground of king and court. Be that as it may, Gloucester's death in 1447 had no appreciable effect on Pecock's triumphant career.

But everywhere events were assuming ominous form. The very bishopric he gained had been the see of his old friend Moleyns, and Moleyns had fallen victim to a popular fury which Pecock himself may have done something to aggravate by his paradoxes.¹ Suffolk, his patron, had only a brief summer of prosperity before him, with a terrible ending; the king was hopeless, the national prestige had fallen to zero, government was, over broad stretches of the realm, in abeyance, and the Yorkists, men new to Pecock and almost

¹ *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 174.

inevitably hostile, were coming into prominence, and even power. Yet whatever his inmost thoughts were, Pecock's energies in these years betray no shade of hesitation. Between 1449 and 1456 he crowned the now extensive edifice of his writings with their logical completion. The *Donet* and the *Folewer to the Donet* (the latter written six years after his great sermon) established his formal system of morality; the *Represser* perfected his polemic against the Lollards by setting out the authority through which he overturned their arguments, and some time probably within the year 1456, the *Book of Faith* practically completed his system. He had still one section of his work unfinished, the 'Theory of the Sacraments,' but apart from that nothing remained for him but detailed supplement and revision. By his own account, he was extremely busy in ecclesiastical affairs (busy enough to fail to read the signs of the times). Also it is just possible that, as a friend of Suffolk, he may have taken part in advocating a steady peace policy in foreign affairs; for there are passages in the *Represser* which strike a distinctly anti-military note,¹ and Gascoigne's story of a political

¹ *The Represser*, p. 516. There is also a reference in the *Book of Faith* (below, p. 276), to English conquests, which a keen patriot would hardly have cared to make.

letter sent in 1456 to the Mayor of London, if true, shows that his energies were sometimes expressed otherwise than in theological terms. If Pecock did indeed meddle with politics, it is strange that he did not see how the wind was changing. In the mere matter of new appointments, the signs were all against him. The old complacent days were gone, when he might sneer at hostile doctors in the very presence of the archbishop. Bouchier, a churchman favoured of the Yorkists, was now metropolitan; other appointments, like that of George Nevile to Exeter, were ominous to a former friend of Suffolk and the court; while imprudent utterances on Pecock's part were almost certainly being used to wreck his reputation among the lay lords. His old enemies, the University doctors, had waited long for their prey, cherishing every possible charge that could be raised against him, from the careful statements of his books to the heated or disgusted expletives of his conversation. What precipitated the attack cannot with certainty be ascertained, but we know that in or about 1456 appeared the *Book of Faith*, the complement to the system suggested in the *Represser*, and the most daring of Pecock's treatises. In the same year he sent the letter already mentioned to the Mayor, with

statements in it unguarded enough to take on a disloyal colour;¹ and the opportunity of a long breathing space in the civil strife enabled his academic opponents to enlist secular aid.

The trial, condemnation, and recantation which followed, afford the most notable incident in fifteenth century Anglican church history; but the details, rescued from the obscurity of confused chroniclers by Lewis and Babington, need here be dealt with only as they bear on the character of the victim. Of the man's actual heresies it will be time to speak when his system is examined. His indictment was one of those so-called plain statements in which probabilities combine with malicious misrepresentation to satisfy a public craving for conciseness. His metropolitan selected four main lines of attack: the creed, with special reference to Christ's descent into hell, the authority of the Catholic church, the power of councils, and the understanding and interpretation of Holy Scripture.² The recantation, when it came, dealt in addition with details of the creed, and with that spirit of individualistic reason, which formed

¹ *Loci e libro veritatum*, p. 212.

² *Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede* (Rolls Series), vol. i. p. 281.

the basis of Pecock's thought.¹ In the vaguer regions outside these documents his enemies raged against his rude criticism of the fathers, his old offence at Paul's Cross, and the peculiar enormity of his desire to lay spiritual mysteries before plain men in their mother tongue. The process began at a great council, in October 1457, at which king and nobles were present; it ended with a pitiful scene of humiliation on December 4th. Between these dates there was enacted a spiritual and intellectual tragedy. Pecock had already faced official attack, for Gascoigne, with his usual vividness, tells how Pecock had once braved the University doctors before Archbishop Stafford, brushing their remonstrances aside with an impatient 'Tush' and answering their defence of the fathers with a sneer: 'Why cite ye not yourselves, for ye are doctors, as Jerome and Augustine were.'² Even now, at the outset, there was little appearance of surrender. At the very council from which lay and clerical fury caused him to be expelled, he demanded, with a mental scrupulosity which bordered on the heroic, that he might be judged only by the books completed within the last three years, and

¹ For the confession and abjuration, see *Whethamstede*, pp. 285-7.

² *L. e lib. ver.* p. 217.

that he might have time to revise his copies.¹ Either there or at his next appearance, he had spirit and self-sufficiency enough to insult doctors and bishops alike by claiming as his judges, men more sympathetic to intellect and the ideal than narrow Oxford doctors or heavy feudal bishops. But the strain soon told. From November 11th for more than a fortnight the battle raged, one thing becoming ever more obvious, that it was to be fought *à outrance*. The laymen had given the victim over, the admirers of Pecock's teaching, who thought him the greatest of doctors, seem to have kept discreet silence at the crisis, and the infuriated doctors and insulted prelates offered only the alternatives of recantation or the stake. Pecock had already discussed, with perfect self-complacency, the theory of such a position. Might a man, he had asked in his *Folewer to the Donet*, forswear himself under compulsion, even if forswearing should take so aggravated a form as idolatry? And he had answered that the prohibition must come indirectly or, in his own phrase, '*lateral*i': as if therbi othere symple Cristen men schulden be sclaundrid, that is to seie for her symplete

¹ A study of the Cambridge MS. of the *Represser* is instructive as to Pecock's minuteness of re-examination. It was, of course, the copy used in the trial.

schulden be made liȝt forto falle into verri ydolatrie, for that y am so notable a persoon, and therewith thei ben not enformyd upon my privey seid hidyng of myne ententis.'¹ But even on these sophistical terms, he could not have justified any bowing down in the house of Rimmon on his own part. He had, through twenty years of patient thought, elaborated his own position; mistakes had been pruned away, and every position had been consciously accepted and re-accepted. If he had written or spoken what other men called heresy, he had done so in absolute consciousness of his meaning, and he believed it to be the truth of God. Recantation had an obvious meaning to himself and the nation. It could be no temporary retreat, but only the surrender of intellectual gains, gathered through a long lifetime—in short, suicide. There are some men to whom the fire of a perilous decision lights up new realms of truth, so that their best gift to the world is their doctrine, illuminated and made real by the pains of martyrdom. But Pecoek had, as we shall see, staked all on the pure intellect. Sentiment, enthusiasm, the appeals and illustrations of the senses and the natural man, had obtained no recognition in his gospel, and crude nature had her revenge when, in the

¹ *Folewer to the Donet*, 62^b.

dilemma between intellectual truth, established firmly through his own death, and a life whose continuance meant a refutation deeper than ever logic could contrive, he chose the ignoble course. Only his enemies remain to report the successive steps of his ruin, but truth gleams through. He had accepted tamely the insults of Nevile of Exeter on a subject where he had the learning of years to oppose to the aristocratic ignorance of an illegally appointed youth. 'My Lord of Chichester,' the boy had sneered, 'God in just judgment wishes you to suffer these same great insults, because you denied the truth of the words written by the blessed Jerome, and St. Augustine, and the holy doctor and Pope Gregory, and in the writings of other holy men.' And Pecock had had no answer but a lame apology: 'It grieves me that I wrote so, for I was imperfectly learned in these matters.'¹ If Whethamstede does not belie him, he made final choice of surrender with the consequences of his action fully in his mind. There is a suggestion of brutal untruth in the phrase as given in the Abbey register,² 'If I should defend my propositions, death is before me, and the pains of burning. But if I do not, there is the scandal

¹ *Loci e lib. ver.* p. 213.

² *Registrum Abbatiae Johannis Whethamstede*, p. 284.

among men and their reproach.' Whether he ever expressed his feelings in set terms or no, these were the actual alternatives, and the shame of his retreat could hardly have been increased by more explicit confession. In any case, between November 28th and December 4th, he passed through every stage of self-abasement which the vicious hate of all-powerful enemies could suggest, and the last clear vision of him granted to us, is that of the consummation of December 4th. Ten years earlier, he had preached his famous sermon at Paul's Cross, listened to by favouring prelates, conscious of a distinguished past, and confident of a great future; a man who might despise the murmurings of the crowd, and the ill-natured criticisms of the college pedants. Now he faced the same crowd, but it was that he might kneel before prelates, who feared his ability and hated his presumption; it was that he might retract every opinion he had ever cared to hold, and subscribe to errors, the very statement of which must have excited his intellectual contempt; and the mob, which faced him wherever he turned his head, was there to see the last indignity inflicted on one whom they hated.

It is not necessary to follow him into the vagueness of the few years that remained to him of life. He had sufficient independence left to

attempt an appeal to Rome; but when England had made up her mind Papal decisions were mere empty noise, and the attempt at rescue was promptly checked. After confinement or at least constrained residence at Canterbury and Maidstone, he passed finally to Thorney, where, if he had ever cared for the mountains of his native land, he might eat out his heart in the marshy flats of the Fen country, and where books and writing material, the only means of recreation he ever cared for, were either denied him or so restrained as to render them useless. Gascoigne, with the petty malice of a soured academic mind, has inserted in his manuscript an insulting incident, which cries lie on every line of it; how, in the days of his shame at Canterbury, Pecoock made willing sport for the Philistines, and reached a depth beyond that which even his persecutors desired, as he repeated in doggerel confession:

‘Wyt hath wundur that reson kan not tel;
How a moder is mayd and God is man,
Leve reson, beleve ye wonder;
Beleve hath mastry and reson is under.’¹

We do not know the year of his death; no stone marks the place of his burial; and so completely has historic record neglected the man himself that of his physical being we have only this in

¹ *Loci e lib. ver.* p. 217.

certainly, that he was what Gascoigne calls 'dispositus ad lepram corporis,' as were also others of his family. But after all, his significance is intellectual, and from the few volumes which have escaped the fires of 1457 it is still possible to construct something like a consistent body of thought, and to relate it to a living personal force. Together these seem to me to combine into an intellectual individuality second only to that of Wycliffe in the history of the English Renaissance.

III.

PECOCK'S CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH THOUGHT

IT may savour of paradox to claim Pecoek as a representative of Renaissance thought, for the notes which distinguish that revolution of the intellect are not at first sight conspicuous in his history and his pages. The full-blooded Renaissance man was one inspired by the very breath of innovation. By accident he had had predecessors in the pursuits which composed his life, but their wisdom was as nothing beside the fierceness of onset with which he followed his end for himself. He was a man appreciative of facts in their full concreteness, knowing that the mere capacity for seeing an object with open face was the first of mental qualities. Attempting to see truth in detail, he was prepared also to let fact force its own philosophy upon him ; *a priori* notions were outside his province. A born investigator, a fearless theoriser, he carried everywhere to his work the zest of romance, and a dash which, although it left him feeble as a philosopher, carried him to the heights of literature. To the perfect Renais-

sance adventurer like Machiavelli, the whole pre-existing world of politics, morality, and religion was non-existent as a support to authority ; its contents were merely facts to be included in the final synthesis. So truth, in the end, often appeared with the brilliance and doubtfulness of a paradox, and in the luminous outline in which each object of Renaissance worship stood out, there was the constant risk of some exciting but misleading failure in proportion. Italy, from Pecock's days onward, must always stand as the true example of the nation renascent, for there alone did the spirit of adventuring intellect gain control, and make the land a portent in the eyes of all who went to learn from her, whether they were poisoners or metaphysicians.

It must be confessed that, placed in juxtaposition with the fifteenth or sixteenth century Florentine, the figure of Pecock strikes the eye tamely, and with a suggestion of rusty age. He was the man of a depressing time and country. Round him dull poets were chanting, in broken notes, of hopeless subjects ; churchmen, when they were not knaves and fools, were losing all sense of the ideal in petty domestic administration and unoriginal plodding ; heavy-minded thinkers were stumbling, in their repetition of scholastic truisms, over the work of earlier and more vigorous minds.

Like almost every other intellectual leader of the north, Erasmus alone excepted, Pecock stands convicted of a subjection, at least partial, to older methods. His work was to be that of the scientist in divinity, but his weapons were often of most ancient type. Mediaeval logic was his two-handed sword, and he ever spoke of the syllogism with a reverence which he was not prepared to concede to God himself. 'A sillogism wel reuled,' he was fond of asserting, 'after the craft tau3t in logik, and havyng ii premyssis openli trewe and to be grauntid is so stronge and so my3ti in al kindis of maters, that thou3 al the aungels of hevene wolden seie that his conclusioun were not trewe, 3itt we schulde leeve the aungels sei yng and we schulden truste more to the proof of thilk sillogisme than to the contrarie sei yng of all the aungels in hevene.'¹ So completely was his mind in subjection to this formal process, that he came to attribute to it practically magical powers of investigation, a capacity for revealing the truth which dispensed with the need for new facts. It was in large part his syllogistic training which led him on to become at times the most flagrant sophist of his age. Everywhere, on the face of his work, or lurking in corners, one comes upon ingenious falsehoods, where the man has

¹ *Book of Faith*, below, p. 174, f. 43^a.

lost all sense of reality and is simply giving a display of syllogistic gymnastics. The central position of the *Book of Faith*, 'that we owen to bileeve to sum seier which may fail while it is not knowe that thilk seier therynne failith,' assumes in its creator's hands the sprightliness of paradox; and the ingenuity with regard to preaching,¹ which must have cost him so much labour, was nothing more than a tricky quibble on the meaning of the word 'preaching.' But how far love of school logic could mislead him may be comprehended only when one watches his zest for defence carrying him on to uphold, not the essence of the Church, but the corruptions hanging loosely round it. In the dialogues where parent instructs child, he perpetually allows the son to pose the father, in order that he may free himself from difficulty by some miraculous sleight of mind. His defence of the Franciscan habits of counting money with a stick, and the substitution of jewels for coins, both of them brazen evasions of the spirit which inspired the rules of St. Francis, remains the finest absurdity ever perpetrated by a first-rate mind.² With what an air of probability does he bring the facts of human nature to bear on the case, and how soothingly moral is his contention

¹ See the second section of the Introduction.

² *The Represser*, pt. v. chap. xiv.

that the distinction between counting money with the hand, and telling it by stick, marks just that cleavage which exists between luxury accepted without qualms, and a firm Puritanism. Pecock, had he attained the honour of a school title, might have borrowed from a great predecessor the epithet of 'the doctor subtle.'

But his love of old methods led him even further from the light of science, for he used his power of logical and formal construction to grind out long heavy systems in religion and morals to take the place of old law, and the night of formal unreality closes early upon the dull attempt. Pecock may have despised positive law, but he must have spent much of his time in reconstructing fresh formulae, whose only novelty was that they had not previously existed. The two volumes in which Pecock discussed moral law, the *Donet*, and the *Folewer to the Donet*, are full of bold, frank assertion, but what they actually accomplish in the end is simply a new school framework for morality. It was well to rail at 'such loose gibettis as ben the teching of the seven deedly sins,' and even the ten commandments reveal flaws to modern investigation; but Pecock was more mediaeval than the monks themselves when he built up those four tables of 'eendal' and 'meenal' virtues, the number of

which in detail he allowed to vary between twenty-seven and thirty,¹ and the first table of which included 'these viii pointis of meenal virtue, that is to seie, forto governe us leernyngly, preisyngly, dispreisyngly, preiyngly, thankingly, worschippingly, disworschippingly, and sacramentyngly.' If ever the student of Pecock feels inclined to dismiss his author to some limbo of the dark ages, it is when he expounds, through pages of the *Donet*, these new-named uncomfortable virtues, and when, in the second part of his *Folewer*, he falls down in logical admiration before his new moral fetish. Whatever claim is made for Pecock, it must be modified to allow for this ingrained habit of logical sophistication, which has dulled so many of his pages, which has forced him into a style radically clumsy, because everywhere based on the logical setting of his thought, and which, at its best, merely enlivens some few pages at the expense of the author's reputation for sanity and humour.

But when this criticism has been made, the worst word against his intellect has been spoken. He was like some explorer setting out to perils and new discoveries, armed with a blunderbuss and directed by some ancient compass—the aim

¹ He constructs the tables in the *Donet*, and in the *Folewer* provides his own commentary.

modern and great, the means a little out of date. Nor were all his means so obsolete. The very adoration of the syllogism which at times misled him, was on its other side a sign of his belief in reason, and his resolution to know even God only through his intellect. From the outset, he resolved to have as little as possible to do with tradition. He stands in history a comically heroic figure, somewhat rampant, spurning the great names of the past, and gaining by his boldness. Whether it be Gascoigne who tells some story of him, or merely later report hinting at his misdeeds, or the man himself shining through his own pages, the impression remains one and the same ; a doctor despising all other earlier doctors, with vocal 'Tushes' or 'Bahs,' or contemptuous waves of the hand. Aristotle had been great, and Christians were wont to take him as their intellectual saint, but Pecoock had unmasked the rogue. 'If thou wilt have strengre witnessis to this purpos than is the witness of Aristotil,' he says on some point of ethics in the *Folewer*, 'loke into a sermoun which y made in Latyn to the clergie'; and in the same treatise he paid his tribute to the Greek philosopher, and made his final estimate of him in a sentence: 'What was Aristotil other than a lover of truth, and therefore a laborer bisi forto fynde the knowyng of trouthe bothe for him-

self and for othere. . . . It likith not to me forto reverence and folewe Aristotil azens treuth. For wel y wote, it was nevyr Aristotilis wil that eny man schulde so do.'¹ What mediaeval tradition could not win from him towards Aristotle, he was little likely to yield to the fathers. He did indeed call Augustine 'one of the cheef dukis of hooli doctouris,'² and everywhere he proved himself a careful student of their works; but his usual attitude was one of very critical appreciation. 'Certis,' he said in the *Represser* of Jerome, 'his tunge was not the key of heven or of erthe.' He despised the habit of mind which he saw around him, where feeble intellect and spiritual sloth found an easy solution for all difficulties, in the pages of men whom they failed to understand. Authority of diverse sorts had too long hampered inquiry, and his great aim was, in his own words, to appeal to that power of reason which was 'the largist book of autorite that ever God made.' It is the foremost note of Pecoock's intellectual distinction that he cleared the ground in this drastic fashion for the free play of reason. He was neither the first nor the greatest of English rationalists, but he was the only man within reach of the sixteenth

¹ *The Folewer to the Donet*, f. 68.

² *The Folewer*, f. 30.

century entitled to the name, and he yields to no subsequent thinker in the vehemence of his rational message. Reason he never strictly defined, but, in the *Represser* he makes it plain that, for him, it was that human energy which had to do with mental and spiritual things, as the senses and the limbs were related to the merely sensuous and material world. It was for him a thing given, and the only key designed by God to open the secrets of the world unseen. He knew the austerity of the mental life, but he was filled with loathing at the subterfuges in which men took refuge to escape the intellectual struggle for existence. In the most exalted moment of his writing, he prayed God that his truth might be freely given to rational inquiry and thus rationally held: 'O thou Lord Jesu, God and man, heed of the Cristen chirche, and techen of Cristen bileeve . . . suffre thou ordeyne and do that the lawe and the feith, which the chirche at any tyme kepith, be receyvid and admittid to falle undir this examinacioun, whether it be the same verri feith which thou and thi apostlis tau3ten or no, and that it be receyved into examinacioun whether it have sufficient evydencis for it to be verry feith.'¹ 'And it were a vilonye,' he continues with vehemence,

¹ *Book of Faith*, below, p. 131.

'putting to Crist, that he schulde geve such a feith to his peple, and into which feith he wolde his peple turne alle othere peple, and 3itt he wolde not allowe his feith to be at the ful tried, and that he durste not be aknowe his feith to be so pure and so fyne fro al falsehede, that it my3te not bi strengthe of eny evydence be overcomen.' Like a greater man, he hated fugitive and cloistered faith and virtue, and if, in the hard individualism of his mind, he sought too little help from his betters, he may be pardoned in an age when his sin of over-independence was unique.

But Pecock's love of reason was something richer than reliance on cool unmodified mental processes. In its refinements, it revealed itself in a historic sense, unequalled in England for more than a century, and a capacity for the scientific standpoint, at times startlingly modern. No doubt Pecock shared with his time its characteristic confusion of the classic and the mediaeval, but in that he sins in company with the greatest of Italian painters, if not indeed with all sixteenth-century England. His power of seeing movements and arguments in historic perspective has never been adequately acknowledged. The Bible, except in moments of sophistical madness, he read with the historic understanding of a modern, at least with regard to its continuity and the

interrelation of its parts. By a wild but extraordinarily ingenious flight of fancy, he was able to set down a general statement of Moses' debt to his predecessors curiously similar to that of modern higher criticism.¹ It is true that the long line of literary succession which he traced out from Enoch to Moses, was framed in the true spirit of his age, but the idea behind it all is modern. In historic exegesis, too, he was so far above his Lollard opponents that he could justly taunt the self-styled Biblemen with ignorance of their own divine authority. In more purely historical questions, such as that of Constantine's donation, his sense of the value of authorities is of the slightest; yet, as a page of critical reasoning, the chapter discussing the point has obvious merits,² and the brilliant passage in his *Book of Faith*, wherein he estimates the value of traditionary and oral information, reveals a knowledge of the very central principles of evidence. 'O my son,' he says, 'if thou woldist take hede hou a tale or a tiding, bi the time that it hath runne thorough iiii or v mennys mouthis, takith pacchis and cloutis, and is chaungid in dyvers parties, and turned into lesingis, and all for defaute of therof the writing . . . thou

¹ *The Book of Faith*, ff. 100 *seq.*; below, p. 261.

² *The Represser*, pt. iii. chap. xii.

schuldist ful soone and ful sikirli deeme, and so schulde ech wel avisid man deeme, that the long tale of the gospels myȝte never bi eny long time be treuli and aftir oon maner toolde, and reportid, and remembrid of dyvers folk without therof the writing.'¹ Once again it is the environment and detail which hampers the inquirer; the method employed is almost modern. No ignorance of classical detail, or confusion of authority, can conceal Pecock's firm grasp of the principles of historic development. At root, this is because, wherever his mind worked free from contemporary confusions, it instinctively chose the method we now call scientific. If science has taught anything, it has made clear the value and nature of fact, and the true use of evidence, and both features Pecock appreciated as no contemporary Englishman did. It is strange, in the midst of dreary mediaeval wanderings on psychology, and discussions as to the exact position, within the head, of the cell phantastic, to come on a frank recognition of mind in animals: 'I se not as ȝit eny inconvenience which wole lette forto holde that beestis mowe and kunnen forme proposiciouns, argue, and prove, and gete knowyng to hem, bi argument of verri silogisme and of induccioun, about tho

¹ *The Book of Faith*, f. 93^b; below, pp. 250-1.

thingis which thei nowe bi her outward and inward wittis perceyve';¹ and his clear cut separation of the temporary from the permanent in the fourth commandment, redeems some pages of his *Donet* from tedium. But the scientific or Renaissance temper of his mind is best revealed in his capacity for weighing evidence. I do not mean that he had the detailed information which enables even dull-witted modern inquirers to expose falsehood, for wherever the past fell to be examined Pecoock had most inferior equipment for his work. But in that nice sense of fitness, that capacity for balancing observed facts, that knowledge of what reason by its very nature allows and disallows in argument, which we demand from modern investigation, he has had few superiors. Faith, as will be explained below, was his term for one considerable section of knowledge, or rather, by his own strict ruling, the means whereby that knowledge came; and faith was simply a matter of evidence. In his estimates of knowledge and authority, then, he had constant reference to evidence, and everywhere his attitude was faultless. His age offered one great obstacle to scientific method, the use of miracle, and there Pecoock made a determined stand. Truth, he held, was revealed to the

¹ *The Folewer to the Donet*, f. 17.

reason, in every case by rational sanctions, but miracle came as an ill-timed challenge to his intellectual god. As he read the Old Testament, he found record of revelations whose chief support lay in the wonders accompanying their declaration, and he instinctively protested. Often the ground was dangerous, and his silence was excusable, but wherever he might, he massed the forces of his reason against the foe. Moses, as we have seen, he believed in, simply as the redactor of old material, and no God-illuminated magic worker; Esdras reconstructed the law by means purely natural. Towards New Testament miracles he remained silent, but silence is not always consent; and he dismissed the whole world of ecclesiastical miracle in terms whose modifications and reservations must not be allowed to conceal the essential daring of his attitude. Two foes he saw in the pilgrim's road to truth; tradition, with its coward's reluctance to face the labour of individual inquiry, and the miraculous sanction which knaves and dullards sought for their worthless revelations. In the heat of his defence of the Church he had committed himself to several compromising positions, among others to the acceptance of ecclesiastical miracles of the baser sort;¹ but the temptation was great to one who,

¹ See, for example, the *Represser*, pt. ii. ch. xiii.

like Pecoock, was sometimes prouder of his intellect than of Truth, and who, having chosen his cause, was resolute to defend even its weakest positions. A thinker must be judged by his latest utterances (more especially when he continually revised his thought, as Pecoock did), and the challenge of the *Book of Faith* to miracle-mongers and to the very church itself, might have pleased the leaders of modern agnosticism. ‘To privey myraclis we schulden not renne, forto defende oure opinioun or oure answee bi hem, without that sufficient evydence therto serveth. For ellis there myzte noon opinioun bi overcome bi strengthe of argument, hou false ever the opinioun were.’¹ And, in bold estimate of the church’s claims to establish its own truths by means not rational: ‘Thomas of Cantilbiri is a seint; Joon of Bridlington is a seint, in the seid dew undirstonding of this word seynt, and so forth of othere, whos lyvyng, and for whom the myracles doon ben weel examyned and tried bi witnessis sworne; notwithstanding that pretense myraclis and pretense inspiraciouns and pretense appeeringis of God or of aungels, withynne forth, and without forth, and legendis or lives of seyntis, and othere stories whiche ben writen and had in fame, ben ful slider and unsure groundis forto grounde upon hem feith, that is to

¹ *The Book of Faith*, f. 106^b; below, p. 270.

seie a treuthe passing nature and revelid bi God, without passing greet trial of hem. Forwhi, certis among hem a diligent wise ensercher schal fynde, sumtyme supersticiouns, sumtyme errouris azens sure knowen treuthe, sumtyme heresies azens the feith, and sumtyme contrariete bitwie hem silf.'¹

Such was the nature of the weapon with which Pecoek attempted to vanquish falsehood—rational and entirely natural, borrowing no magic power from higher sources, relying for victory on the humanity which seemed so much more potent than any possible divine assistance. With more consistency than one usually finds in rationalists, Pecoek remained still rational in those trying moments when force seems the most satisfactory, and certainly the briefest of solutions, and when vague fears of defeat lead the most rational to distrust the mere weapon of the spirit. In honourable distinction from all his fellows, his genuinely humane spirit loathed the thought of conversion by compulsion, as, in another sphere, it loathed the circumstance of war. The axe and the stake were for him barbarous expedients, to be resorted to only in extreme cases; and almost the most definite charge made against him by his opponents was that of arguing rationally with the heretics in their own mother tongue. One of

¹ *The Book of Faith*, f. 121^b; below, p. 294.

the most notable passages in the *Book of Faith*, the Introduction, must provoke unstinted praise for its rational spirit and the far-sighted scheme suggested there, for the extension of truth through a wide dispersion of apologetic writings in English. Learned in the ways of the Wycliffites, Pecock knew how deeply and broadly their doctrines had been sown by Wycliffe's democratic tactics, and he was confident in the expectation that, in the open field, the gospel which he had to defend, would not be worsted. It was his habit to reason freely with them, and the habit of rational reinterpretation of his own faith which his polemic against Lollardy induced, led him straight to the restatement, in his own rational terms, of the Christian faith.

While it would be false to say that Pecock wrote all his treatises with an eye on the foe, he certainly developed his views from a wonderfully self-critical standpoint, and everywhere stated them as if combat were sooner or later certain; steadily developing them from a central stronghold, and relating each section to every other with the skill of an intellectual strategist. Truth for him had two sources, of unequal magnitude, reason and faith, and reason was the first essential. Man, he believed, had received from God a means of discovering all that might concern him. With the senses he felt his way into the secrets of

external nature; with his reason he was enabled to learn the moral law. Reason was self-sufficient, and that moral law of kind which it revealed asked for no Scriptures or inspired authority to interpret it. Long before either Bible or Church had come into existence, the moral law had been known to man; and even after the Christian revelation it had remained the chief guide of life. All the inspired teachings of all God's vicegerents might be swept away, without affecting man's real knowledge of himself, and his capacity to guide himself in time and through eternity. 'Certis,' says Pecock in the *Represser*, 'this inward book or Scripture of lawe of kinde is more necessarie to Cristen men and is more worthi than is the outward Bible and the kunnyng therof, as fer as thei bothe treten of the more parti of Goddis lawe to man.'¹ Had Pecock lived three centuries later, he might have headed the rationalistic Deists, for like them he found special manifestations of the supernatural unnecessary, and like them he saw his way to a well-ordered universe ruled by a rational and complacent Deity. But Deism was, of course, an impossibility, even in secret thought, and Pecock's life work in divinity lay in relating this firm and certain domain of

¹ *The Represser*, p. 52. Cf. Hooker's statement of the same relation, *Eccles. Polity*, Bk. i. c. 12.

reason to the mysteries of Faith, and in apportioning to each of the conflicting lords of Faith his proper dignity and station. Reason and moral philosophy left him at peace in his own mind, for within his mind lay the grounds of rational certitude and satisfaction. But as a churchman he had to acknowledge the presence of astounding verities, of which his reason told him nothing, however much it might assent to them when given. These were articles of Faith, and of faith Pecock's most definite conception was that 'it is a knowyng wherbi we assenten to eny thing as to trouth, for as mych as we have sure evydencis gretter than to the contrarie that it is toold and affermid to us to be trewe, bi him of whom we have sure evydencis, or notable likli evydencis, gretter than to the contrarie, that therinne he not lied.'¹ It is a chilling definition of that by which most hope to win their spiritual rest, but it is characteristic. Pecock, as we have seen, had an unconquerable aversion to all that interfered with reason, and yet everywhere he found this extra-natural faith asserting its supremacy. In answer, he set himself to a kind of spiritual diplomacy, establishing a border-line for faith, but really filching for reason everything which could colourably be appropriated to it. Confronted with the

¹ *The Folewer to the Donet*, f. 28.

Apostles' creed, he knew that it was not granted to human reason to understand the mysteries at first hand; but he limited the presumption of the claims of faith by proving them mere matters of evidence, reaching from the lowest regions of probability, 'opinial' faith, to that heavenly insight, by which we know even as we are known. Nor was this humiliation sufficient. The first part of his *Folewer*, and the whole of the *Book of Faith* are spent in a long contention, that whatever revelations faith may make, it must in the long run come to the court of reason to receive official confirmation; and, in answer to St. Gregory's famous 'Faith hath no merit, to which man's reason giveth proof,' he asserted the right of reason to have cognisance even of the mysteries of faith, and flung back the phrase with a contemptuous hint at the mistakes of holy men. In truth, faith with him was a little island in the ocean of reason, and he watched with delight the waves, as they sapped the cliffs, and slowly but surely reduced its poor circumference.

Still, he was a Christian prelate, and faith, whatever it was, and before whatever tribunal it had to justify itself, was a real and concrete thing. It was a matter of evidence; but who were the witnesses and with what authority did they speak? Here was the crucial question for

himself. In the world of his own mind reason reigned in tranquillity, but he was something more than a philosopher. He was a busy prelate, contradicting and contradicted by opponents; he was a strenuous defender of the faith against heresy; he was a member of that political organisation, the Church, and found the work of ecclesiastical diplomacy exciting, if not always edifying. So his latest and maturest books, the *Represser*, the *Folewer to the Donet*, and the *Book of Faith*, deal with this most essential of topics, the seat of authority. In the *Represser* he had given Scripture its place. Its highest power lay in the revelation of those most mysterious of truths, the Trinity, the Virgin birth of Christ, and the history of the Incarnation. To these wonders, reason could add not a word. But besides the Gospel, there were the law and the prophets, speaking in oracles, stumbling and often inauthoritative, and there were many things, even in the Ten Commandments, which seemed mere positive ordinances, to be abrogated when some authority or other had discerned a better way. From the *Donet*, the *Represser*, and the *Book of Faith*, it is very evident that Pecock could never own the entire Bible as an infallible guide, but in the same books he makes it plain that there was an inexpugnable fortress of faith,

centring round the ordinary articles of the creed and those parts of the New Testament on which they were based. For the New Testament was the unique source of doctrine definitely Christian, and the creeds were convenient summaries of the essence of Christianity. It was the perception of the strategic value, for faith, of the creeds, which led Pecock to spend all his strength on their articles, so that the errors confessed in his recantation had all some reference to credal statements. Particularly in the *Donet* and the *Book of Faith* the articles of the creed were examined, and it seems extremely probable, as Babington has suggested, that the missing pages of the latter¹ contained that 'new great and long creed written in English' which Gascoigne and Pecock's judges selected for special condemnation. Apart altogether from the articles relating to Christ's descent into hell, the hostile churchman had a suspicion, not altogether unjustifiable, that Pecock's statement of the creed had something too individualistic in its terms, and that so very conscious an understanding of it bordered on serious doubt of its substantiality. But, whatever his motives, Pecock's last definitive statement with regard to Scripture was that in it were to be found the few unshaken and seemingly impregnable mysteries of faith; so he gave its

¹ At least two chapters are lacking in the Cambridge MS.

pages an unwilling homage as equal to reason in value, but not in range. There still remained for settlement the claims of the Church, a dangerous subject for a man of questionably orthodox reputation. He may have known that, even before his trial, he had found a furious opponent of his rationalistic criticism in the Augustinian, Bury. If Scripture found so zealous a defender, it was not unlikely that depreciation of the Church would rouse hosts of irritated apologists, and banish the critic to the wilderness of all those lost souls who, like Marsilius, or Occam, or Wycliffe, had bartered their ecclesiastical heritage for a mess of reason. It speaks well for the man's boldness that he gave his verdict without hesitation. First, with its all-embracing scope stood reason and the moral law; equal in glory but not in substance, the Holy Scriptures; last and the servant of both, the Church.¹ Faith, we have seen, was a kind of evidence and might loosely comprehend both the process of believing the evidence, and the truth witnessed. Now in this sphere of witnessing Pecoek held that the

¹ I am aware that, especially in the first part of the *Book of Faith*, Pecoek gives tremendous weight to the authority of the Church. But that authority is not of the Church against reason, or against Scripture, but of the Church against unskilled laymen.

Bible stood first without rival, as that which not only reinforced with broad reminders the moral law, but also testified to the nature of the Godhead, the life of Christ, and the words which He left for our instruction. Compared with this contribution to human enlightenment, the Church could make but a few meagre pretensions. No office of interpretation, no possession of ancient tradition, or supposed power of alteration, could set the Church on earth beside the lofty witness of Holy Scripture. As the spiritual world in which the fathers and all holy wisdom had dwelt, as the collective exponent, at any given time, of the knowledge given by God to men, she must control opinion and have vast corrective, administrative, and intellectually critical powers. Assisted by supernatural manifestations, she might erect small shrines of worship to the memory of her greater sons, and create a world of petty ordinance and sacred celebration. But in the high realm of faith only one authority disputed with reason the allegiance of men's minds; and the *Book of Faith*, summing up, as it does, the theological position of its author within a year of his trial, shattered, at least for Pecoek, the real potency of the Church in matters of faith, and proclaimed a truth which many had known before, but which few in Pecoek's position had cared to state, and

none of his age, in England, were competent to appreciate.

But why set so appreciative a student of the Bible apart for praise in pure thought, and why relate him to a pagan movement like the Renaissance when the title of Reformer lies to hand? Would it not be wiser, with his foes, to set him down as a successor to Wycliffe; and, with Whar-ton and Lewis, as a forerunner of the sixteenth-century revival? The answer is simple. In all the qualities which distinguish the religious reformer, Pecock was singularly wanting. Even in those bleak days which followed Wycliffe's death, religionists of the reforming sort lived and thought in ways strange to the author of the *Book of Faith*. For the true reformer, religion was a thing of feelings and enthusiasm, the adoration of a Christ very human in his divine love; and Pecock speaks of Christ and God as cold impersonal expressions of ultimate truth. To the biblemen, and to Wycliffe himself, the volume of Holy Scripture was not some utilitarian or rational medium through which partial truth was conveyed. It was not only the authentic record of Christ's life and agony, but a complete and sufficient rule for all human action. Again and again, in his treatise *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, Wycliffe sets his great authority beyond all earthly and profane

sources—'in scriptura sacra est omnis veritas,'—and the interpretation of its pages is no theme for sophistic argument, but an act more solemn than the very sacrament of the altar itself.¹ Above all, the reformer believed that round him there abode an unseen but real presence, where God's spirit met the feeble love and imperfect faith of the humblest, so that there remained need of neither priest to regulate the movements of his soul, nor doctor to explain the mysteries of Holy Writ. Pecoek spent his best energies in explaining how little conduct had to do with spiritual knowledge; Wycliffe believed that it was above all things necessary that the scholar of Holy Writ should pray that he might understand,² and he believed in the revelation made to the humble and the contrite in heart. Whether for praise or blame, we may not set Pecoek among those sincere, warm, irrational, and unacademic followers of Wycliffe, who found in a Bible and a private religion the kindest retreat from a sordid middle or lower-class existence, and whose false emphasis in attack and crudely materialistic shattering of Catholic mysteries met with the superior correction and disdain of the man of letters. His was a

¹ Wycliffe, *De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae* (Wycl. Soc.), vol. ii. p. 156.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 202.

world where cool reason passed beyond the turbid realms of the emotions, and where the end was no enthusiastic salvation but a steadfast gaze into the face of Truth. He had no philanthropic intentions beyond freeing men from error, and he erected his theological system with something of that same disregard for convention and the feelings of ordinary men, which has made Machiavelli's name, in another sphere, a byeword for coldly calculating villany. With just a little more intellectual force, with a character as strong as his mind, and with a country hostile, it might be, but competent to appreciate, Pecoek might easily have left his name in English philosophy as that of the originator of modern rationalism, the thinker who first took from his countrymen their household gods and left them in the bright desolation of their own reason. He had few of the external marks of greatness. Dull in his most systematic work, sophistic in arguments where sophism seems to spell inadequacy, everywhere leaving loopholes of escape from his most daring conclusions, and at the end losing the world, and with it his own soul, Reginald Pecoek makes a sordid fellow to the more dazzling figures of Renaissance Italy. But such as he is, he is not simply the best that fifteenth-century England has to offer ; he is the one man of the country who may be classed with

the Italians. Sir John Fortescue is a belated patriarch, who grasped such truth as is vouchsafed to patriotic Englishmen of sound but heavy understanding; Humphrey of Gloucester has written himself down an elegant amateur, whose highest accomplishment was attained in eloquence, charmingly reinforced for Italian panegyrists by the rank and presumed wealth of its author; the dusty scholars who found their way to Florence and Rome for the most part returned to England merely to add one more imperfectly apprehended study to the usual monkish or academic course; even the great men who adorned Tudor England by their worth and abilities were but imperfect heroes of renaissance thought, and the noblest of them, finding character suffering at the expense of mind, chose the Kingdom of Heaven when the new road to truth seemed to lead elsewhere. Of all these men Pecoek alone maintained the persistent search for truth in the light of reason while day and freedom lasted. The tragedy of his life lies not merely in the intellectual suicide with which it closed, but in the temporal penalties of oblivion and neglect, which buried his name and destroyed his books. To the well-disposed it may appear a small piety to fulfil, for the latest of his books, that desire of his to have his volumes multiplied and distributed to those who care for truth or who feel the pangs of error.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE Church in England is in straits, through the prevalence of disobedience and of heresy among the laity; nor can the arguments of the clergy, based on the assumption of their own inerrancy, prevail at all. The author enters with a new plan. He will set aside the argument from infallibility as suspect, and will substitute the plea, "that we ought to believe a teacher, who may fail, in so far as it is not known that he has failed." He desires also to bring the new argument directly before the heretics, by the multiplication, and distribution among them, of his apologetic works in English. At the same time he deprecates hasty criticism, more especially from those who think the argument of the book too ambitious. It is well to convince the laity, by weight of learning, of their incompetence in these matters. As a defence of the church against heresy, the book is complementary to the *Represser*.

CHAPTER I.

In the dialogue, which here begins, the son desires of the father further information on faith than he has

received in earlier books. In answer, faith is defined as that kind of knowledge which a man gains "from another person which may not lie, or who is God." It differs from other knowledge, in that it comes not "by natural wit", but through the authoritative statement of another; it varies in importance, from cardinal doctrines down to belief in "old storial deeds and gests." Faith has its relation to normal truth; since the confidence of the believer in his authority involves some "other truth opener and surer" than the new article of faith. And this relation, strictly defined, appears to be proof by means of the syllogism.

CHAPTER II.

A flaw in the MS. affects the beginning of the chapter. The question follows out of the first chapter—the relation of faith to natural rational processes. Faith, says the father, is always "groundable and provable by evidences in reason"; so that it may always be stated rationally enough to convince even infidels. Unbelievers, indeed, may oppose this conviction by force; but Christian believers may not use such means. They must be ready to give a reason for the faith that is in them. Nevertheless faith differs from ordinary intellectual processes; its articles are to be believed "for the infallible truth of the affirmer which is God." Critical examination comes as a preliminary, to test whether any article "ought to be believed as faith, or no"; and here it is that clerks must labour, "to draw men into consent of true faith by clear wit," rather than to produce conviction by irrational force.

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CHAPTER III.

The question raised is, whether faith gains or loses, according as the evidences for it grow clearer and more perfect. In answer : faith, opinial or sciential, is a variety of opinion or science ; and as opinion or science gains by evidence, so also faith. It is clear, therefore, that the believer's merit is increased, not diminished, by "the getting and the having of more and more evidences." St. Gregory, indeed, has said : "Faith hath no merit, to which man's reason giveth other sure proof." But holy men may err, and Gregory contradicts himself. So, as it is greatest demerit to believe where no evidence exists to make us believe, greatest merit comes from belief based on the soundest evidence.

CHAPTER IV.

The son raises objections to the doctrine that faith depends on evidence. Was not Thomas blamed for seeking further proof from Christ, and Zacharias similarly ? The father discriminates between disbelief in spite of adequate evidence ; acceptance of partial evidence, with a zeal to seek for more ; and perfect contentment with the evidence in hand. Thomas was blameworthy, for he refused belief on evidence satisfactory to his fellows, and stronger than that possessed by us.

The son raises two minor points ; one as to the constraining power of evidence, to which the father replies that evidence must constrain, but not in spite of the will ; the other, a consequence of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, "that faith is not of things clearly

seen, and surely known," is answered by a discrimination between opinial or imperfect faith, and sciential faith, by which we see with open face.

CHAPTER V.

The definition of faith is developed by opposing to it rival theories. Some hold that faith is "a knowing of a thing, not by strength of evidence, but by assignment of the will." But, in the first place, steadfastness of the will in cleaving to a proposition is, in itself, no guarantee of truth; and, in the second place, faith high as it is never breeds the same degree of true steadfastness, as does "science or certain kunning." Others have mystic doctrines, by which God the First Truth gives, through divine illumination, a faith "whereby understanding and will have surety, but not clear perception of the truth believed,"—mere childish fantasies.

Towards the close, the son "would learn what order is to be put between faith and the church." The church is made of the people as its material cause, and of faith as its formal cause; or rather the church is the people, not in themselves, but as they are joined together in one faith. This faith is the essence of the church, and the true church must be conscious that it has received its faith from God.

CHAPTER VI.

Two minor crises in the theory of faith are faced. In the first instance, is it right to say that neither the church in heaven, nor the church on earth is to be believed, if it say contrary to "a syllogism, well ruled

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after the craft taught in logic, and with two premises openly true?" To which the answer is that it is right, "nevertheless it followeth not that the churches in heaven or on earth, err or may err, in matter of faith."

In the second instance, where Paul is held to set the earthly church above the heavenly, by his words, "Though we, or an angel from heaven preach another gospel," etc., he merely declares that the gospel, revealed to him by Christ himself, must prevail against anything in earth or heaven. Paul is no more the church on earth than his supposititious angel is the church in heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

A modification of the argument, in favour of the church, must be made. This reverence must be paid to the church on earth, that what it holds as faith, "every singular person is bound, under pain of damnation, to believe." For the church holds its authority by descent from the apostles; there is scriptural warrant for implicit obedience to them, and therefore to their successors. Nor can possible error weaken this authority. Nay more. No zeal for the faith, as he holds it, may justify a heretic in his opposition to the church. Of all heretics from the first, many of whom were zealous for their beliefs, down to the Lollards, it is true "that if Lucifer and Adam were in damnable sin, so all gainsayers to the prelates of the church are in like damnable sin."

CHAPTER VIII.

Granting the claims of the church to obedience in normal cases, is it not right to oppose it where it errs?

In answer : it has been conceded that obedience is due, where the church errs not, or where it is not seen to err. But let error be assumed. To whom will the critics prove it? Assuredly the jury must not come from among themselves. If the truth contrary to the church be clear, it must be clear to the church. Heretics, to justify their heresy, and escape damnation, must be able to convert the church. The church itself is unable to convert Lollards and heathen to itself ; but it escapes a similar penalty, because the heathen use violence to prevent conversion from their ranks, and the Lollards refuse to consider the views of their opponents. If the Lollards ask who reasons thus, it is one who knows their views better than they do themselves ; who has written for their conversion ; and who will persistently contend that if they do not absolutely prove their case, they must incur the penalty of deadly sin, damnation.

CHAPTER IX.

The argument is continued. It has been proved that God himself ordained the clergy of his church to be obeyed. It is now evident that this obedience is in spite of the church's fallibility. God has ordained that we trust hands and feet, will and reason, although all may fail and err ; and so with the church. We ought to see to it, where we may, that the clergy fail not ; but if they do fail, we are still bound to obedience, and to be rewarded for obedience, as though no error entered. Christ said to his apostles, and in them to all their successors, "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me."

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CHAPTER X.

The argument is continued. The gainsayer to the church finds his conscience oppose obedience to an erring church. But the clergy too are loath to err, and their common conscience is more enlightened than that of the individual. The church has the superior position here, and opposition is mere folly and presumption. But may not Scripture give the critic support, external to the church? It may, "anent all the faith which Holy Writ teacheth." But the church is the only learned and special interpreter of Scripture, as lawyers are of law; and distrust of expert findings is as foolish in one case as in the other. To summarise: if we believe the church infallible, we must obey it. If we hold it fallible, obedience is still required, so long as we cannot "sufficiently and irrefutably prove that the church does fail." And this proof must be made in public disputation; until which time, "hold ye never yourselves to have better evidence for your side than the church hath for his, and hold ye not yourselves to be out of state of damnation."

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

In Part I., Chapter V., church and Scripture have been connected; the problem is "In what relation?" The son raises eight arguments in favour of the supremacy of the church.

i. Our faith may be grounded in tradition and oral succession, apart from writing. The Scripture is not necessarily the chief ground of our faith.

ii. The apostles taught apart from Scripture; "they preached by word of mouth the whole faith sufficiently."

iii. The clergy, successors, in this vocation, to the apostles, were and are the principal ground of faith.

iv. The apostles, more than Scripture, founded the faith of Christ. They were, in their time, the church. The church is one and unchangeable in power and attributes; therefore the church still holds the supremacy over Scripture, possessed by the apostles.

v. The church, which may "dispense" with Scripture, is greater in authority than Scripture.

vi. and vii. The church interprets Scripture, and therefore is above Scripture.

viii. The apostles' creed is authoritative. It bids men "believe to the general holy church on earth"; so all Christians must believe determinations of the church, although it determine against Scripture.

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CHAPTER II.

The father begins his reply to the eight arguments. Firstly, concerning oral tradition, and teaching apart from writing, no faith is sufficient which neglects its own fulness, precision, and consistency. But, as recent parallels prove, it would have been impossible to hand on "the long tale of the gospels, without thereof the writing." The apostles themselves wrote, to keep in mind the multitude of gospel truths. And if the lateness of their writing be quoted, many circumstances—the nature of the gospel, the need for gradual instruction, persecutions—explain the interregnum. Texts, quoted both from the Old and New Testament in favour of oral communication of God's law, simply mean that God wills men so to learn by spoken word, but neither chiefly, nor sufficiently.

CHAPTER III.

The problem of Chapter II. is raised afresh, by the tradition that no scripture existed until Moses by inspiration wrote Genesis. The challenge is met by a counter-challenge. How can one tell that no scripture existed before Moses? Records exist of early writing—Enoch founded letters; and natural reason traces the literary connection from Adam to Moses. "Moses compiled Genesis out of written stories, not by miracle." Similarly, Esdras renewed not the Old Testament by inspiration, but merely multiplied copies of the books of scripture. For, as with Moses, so with Esdras. We can trace a continuous use of God's written law through the captivities. From both cases, it is plain "that to

privy miracles we should not run to defend our opinions, without sufficient evidence thereto serving."

CHAPTER IV.

Answer is given to the seven remaining arguments.

ii. and iii. Although Christ bade his apostles to preach, and although they did preach, neither he nor they meant it for "principal and sufficient teaching."

iv. One Lord, one faith and one baptism there are, and the church now, is the church of the apostles. But the church is no longer endowed with gifts such as they had, who knew Christ, and founded his kingdom. Apostolic succession may be granted without these consequences.

v. Scripture varies in importance. There are positive ordinances such as the church still makes; and over these the church has power. But it "is not even in authority with all the scripture of the New Testament, nor with other parts," if by equality is meant capacity to change.

vi. The church expounds; but power of exposition gives it no more supremacy over scripture, than power of construing scripture gives to the grammarian.

vii. In continuation: "exposition is merely a power of knowing," and gives just such authority as a judge has "to declare the true intent of the law written."

viii. "To believe to a thing," and "to believe a thing to be" are separate facts. The history of the creed proves that it requires merely acknowledgment of the church's existence—"one universal church to be, with its parts not discording one from another in the faith of God." The chapter closes with a definition of the word "catholic."

CHAPTER V.

The question is proposed: "May the clergy, or the church, make anew any article to be faith, which was not faith before?" Whether faith be taken as the article of belief, or the process of believing, the clergy may not add, in the higher regions, but only teach thereof to the "simpler party of the church." Lower down it may create saints and appoint holy days. Yet since even these minor articles of faith depend on miraculous witnessing, they must be accepted with caution. As for the greater matters, the history of the apostles and of the great councils proves that no articles, but such as came from Holy Scripture, were entrusted to be revealed by the church. The apostles intended not to give any articles of faith, necessary to salvation, apart from writing. If the article of Christ's descent into hell be cited as an exception, the answer is that "neither before, neither after Austin's day did the apostles set that article into the common creed."

Here the manuscript breaks off.

TEXT

THE BOOK OF FAITH

PROLOGUE¹

FACTI sunt filii mei perditii, quia invaluit inimicus: 1a
that is to seie in Englisch thus: *My sones ben*
maad lost for the enemye hath had the maistrie.
Treno. i^e c. Who that wole walke amonge the
peple now lyving in Ynglond fer and neer, and²
wole attende, herkene, heere and se hou dyversely
dyverse persoonys ben in her conceitis sette, he
schal, amonge alle tho dyversitees, heere and
knowe that manye of the lay peple whiche cleven
and attenden over unreulili to the Bible, aȝens
the discrecioun tauȝt in the first party of the
Represser, and in the first and ii^e partys of *The*
*iust apprising Holy*³ *Scripture*, protesten and know-
lechen that thei wolen not fecche and learne her
feith at the clergie of Goddis hool chirche
in erthe; neither thei as for leernyng and
kunnyng of her feith wolen obeie to the clergie

¹ There is no heading in the MS.

² A correction on the margin.

³ 'Ho' is erased in the MS.

or to the chirche; but thei wolen fecche and
 leerne her feith at the Bible of Holy Scripture,
 in the maner as it schal happe hem to undir-
 stonde it. And that, bicause thei seien hem knowe
 1b wel that the clergie may faile and erre as weel as
 thei, teching the feith, namelich sithen, as thei
 seien, the clergie is not worthi be visited bi eny
 special inspiracioun or revelacioun fro God more
 than thei hem silf ben worthi, and that for the
 vices whiche thei seien hem se in the clergie.
 Hou perlose to the same lay persoonys this
 unobedience is, it is ful cleerli schewid in this
 present book, the vii^e, viii^e, and ix^e chapiters.
 For whiche so bireweable and wepeable perel
 whiche the clergie may se in the lay party, which
 ouzte be sugget and obeie to the clergie, as it is
 in the now alleggid placis wel proved, the clergie
 bi compassioun therupon havyng may seie the
 wordis of Jeremye bifore written thus, *My*
sones ben maad lost for the enemy hath had the
maistrie. Certis the feend, which is enemye
 for to bigile alle cristen persoonys, as Petir
 witnessith,¹ hath had the maistrie
 in his going aboute as a roring lyoun, and
 therfore and therbi my sones ben maad lost.
 And thus my sones ben maad lost for the
 2a enemye hath had the maistrie.

¹ A gap left in the MS. for the exact reference (1 Pet. v. 8).

And ferthermore, if in this bifore spokun attendaunce, herkenyng, and heering, in conversacioun taking with peple of dyverse stidis, lenger leiser be lad forth, and mo daies in tyme be spende, it schal be aspied and seen that forto bringe alle the lay peple, as thei ben now wittid and disposid, into obeyschaunce forto bileeue as the clergie bileeveth, this is no meene to be presupposid that the clergie or the chirche of the clergie may not erre in mater of feith, in so myche that summe clerkis attempten and assaien forto calle aȝen suche seid unobeiers into the seid dew obedience to the clergie and by this seide meene. And whilis tho clerkis laboren and ben aboute for to iustifie thilke meene, that the clergie, namelich gaderid togidere in a general counseil, may not erre and faile aȝens eny article of feith, neither may determyne amys aȝens trewe feith, tho clerkis tho whilis laboren in veyn, as into the effect of the seid lay menys turnyng ; ȝhe, and peraventure thei in that doon harme and no good, and thei ^{2b} schenden what thei ben aboute forto amende. Forwhi, thei ben lauȝed into scoorn of the lay personys whiche schulden bi labour of tho clerkis be convertid ; and that, bothe for this conclusioun is so unlikeli to be trewe as the witte and conceite of riȝt greet wittid lay men being of greet reputacioun, and also for that thei han colour of

doctouris writing, sownyng into her therynne partie.

And over this, it semeth to the lay persoonys that tho clerkis ben over favorable in mater longing to her favour and worschip, and ben not iugis indifferent, and standing for the parti which hath the treuthe, whiche ever thilk party be. And for this semyng, the seid lay men han the lasse wille forto truste to the iugement of clerkis in alle othere maters. Certis, ech iust and indifferent iuge ouzte seie and holde aȝens himsilf in trouthe, as wel as aȝens othere persoonys in trouthe, and as with him silf or othere persoonys in trouthe. And bicause that it semeth to the lay persoonys that clerkis,
 30^a namelich holding as now is seid, holden not so indifferentli in the mater longing to her honour and favour, therfore forto allegge the seid meene into eeris of the seid lay men, is not expedient into her conversioun. In so myche that tho clerkis mowe not oonly seie what is writun thus: *In al the nyȝt we laboring han take no thing*; but also ech of hem may seie what Poul rehersith, Rom. x^e ch. in the eende thus: *Al day y streizte out myn hond to a peple that bileeved not, but aȝen seiden me*. Wherto therfore schulde the clergie leene oonly to thilke meene anentis lay men, whiche lay men wole not admitte. Bettir it were to seche aftir¹ another

¹Marginal correction *for*.

meene. Wherfore y, unworthiest and 3ongist and lou3est of prelatis, aspiyng this mischeef azens which y have not knowe eny remedie 3itt hiderto therazens writen, and desiring forto wyne the lay children of the chirche into obedience, whiche, undir greet perel of her soulis, thei owen paie and holde to the clergie, entende and purpos in this present book forto mete azens such unobediencers bi an ^{3b} other wey, and in another maner, and bi meene which the lay persoonys wole admitte and graunte; which meene is this, that we owen to bileeve and stonde to sum seier or techer which may faile, while it is not knowe that thilk seier or techer thereyne failith. And so forto move and convicte hem into obedience, never the lasse and never the latter, to the clergie in leernyng her feith ; thou3 it were so that the clergie may erre and faile azens feith, and thou3 the clergie my3te solempnely determyne azens trewe feith ; so that, by the grace of God, withynne processe of 3eeris it schal be verified forto seie to the clergie what Ysaie propheciede, lx. c. thus: *Thi sones schulen come to thee fro longe and thi dou3tris schulen rise azen to thee fro brood* : that as Ysaie meened that the children of the Cristen chirche schulden come and rise azen fro lengthe and breed of cuntrees, so y hope bi processe of tyme, aftir that this and other bokis schulen be publischid, and be abroad multiplied to

4^a tho personys, and after that bi word and speche at dyverse leisers comunicacioun schal be with tho personys had, it schal be trewe forto seie to the clergie of Goddis hole chirche, that fro lengthe and breed of erring, and of untrewē wyde wandring, thi sones and dou3tris schulen come to thee. Which thing He graunte that forto have the same thing doon, cam forto schede his preciose blood. Amen.

Over these causis here now bifore expressid, into the iustifyng that my now last seid entent, to be perfoormyd in this present book, is to be allowid and acceptid, y may sette therto more thus. If twey thingis ben the principal causis of heresie in the lay peple whiche ben clepid lollardis, 3he and if thei ben causis, as it were, of alle her erringis generally, sotheli, forto remove and take away fro hem tho twey causis muste nedis be the grettist remedie doying azens her erringis, which may be do therto. But so it is that these ii thingis, of whiche 4^b the first is this, over myche leenyng to Scripture, and in such maner wise as it longith not to Holi Scripture forto receyve; and the ii^e is this, setting not bi forto folowe the determynaciouns and the holdingis of the chirche in mater of feith; and that for as myche as thei presupposen as what may be sufficiently provid¹ and wherto thei alleggen wit-

¹A corrupt passage, difficult to set right. Indeed Pecock's composition rather breaks down here.

nessing of Seynt Austyn in his book of Baptym
azens Donatistis, that the chirche may erre in deter-
myning articlis for feith; wherfore foloweth
that the labour, wherby these ii thingis schulden
be amovyd and takun away fro the seid peple
erring in heresie, schulde be the profitablist labour
whiche myzte be doon anentis hem forto make hem
forsake, as it were generally, alle her errouris of
heresie. Wherfore folowingli herof, sithen it is so
that it is wel acceptid and allowid of hiȝe prelatis,
and of louȝer clerkis, what y have write and
laborid in the first party of the *Represser*, and in
the book callid *Iust apprising of Holy Scripture*,
forto remove and take away the first now seid 5a
thing from the multitude of lay peple now erring
in heresie; so bi lijk skile this ouzte be wel
acceptid and allowid, what y write in this present
book, forto remove and take away the ii^e now
seid thing from the multitude of lay peple
now erring. Which twey thingis y dare wel seie
wole not be take away from hem, but bi such
labour as y make in the first party of the *Represser*,
and in the book callid *Iust apprising of Holy Scrip-
ture*, into the distroyng of the first seid thing; and
bi the labour of myn here take intent, to be per-
foormed in suche maner as it schal bi performyd in
this present book, into distroyng of the ii^e seid
thing. And ferthermore, into tyme these twey

seid thingis be take so cleerly away from hem that
 thei kunnen not seie therto nay, thei schulen never
 be convertid. But forsothe, that these writyngis
 now spokun, and othere mo maad in the lay peplis
 langage, take her effectis, into reformyng of the lay
 people now erryng, it is not ynou3 that the seid
 5^b bokis be writen and made and leid up or rest in the
 hondis of clerkis, thou3 fame and noise be made
 greet to the seid lay peple of suche bokis, and that
 tho bokis schulde opene to hem that thei erren ;
 but tho bokis musten be distributid and delid
 abroad to manye, where that nede is trowid that
 thei be delid : and that the seid erring persoonys
 take longe leiser, forto sadli and oft overrede tho
 bokis, unto tyme thei schulen be wel aqueyntid
 with tho bokis, and with the skilis and motivis
 therynne writen, and not forto have in oon tyme,
 or ii tymes, a list superficial overreding or heering
 oonly. Forwhi, the stronge confeermyd oold
 custom which thei han, rootid bi longe tyme into
 the contrarie, wole make that these bokis at first
 schulen be unsavery, thou3 aftirward thei schulen
 be ful delectable, as experience hath be had of this
 trouthe in dyverse persoonys of thilk multitude.
 And sithen thilk longe uce and custom wole lette
 6^a hem, as wel forto seche aftir the now seid
 bokis, and forto do cost into the writyng and
 making and multipliying of tho bokis, eer thei

knowe tho bookis, thou3 ful moche tiring and provoking be maad to thilk peple that thei take tho bokis into such seid sad and long studiing, and that thei spende her money into so profitable a thing to them, therfore if prelatis and othere my3ty men of good have greet zele and devocioun into the hasty turnyng of the seid erring peple, forsothe thei musten, at her owne cost, do tho now seid bokis to be writun in greet multitude, and to be wel correctid, and thanne aftir to be sende, and to be govun or lende abroad amonge the seid lay persoonys, where nede is trowid to be. Wel were the man which hadde riches, and wolde spende it into this so greet goostli almes, which passith ful myche the delyng abroad of clothis to greet multitude of pore persoonys, notwithstanding that bothe kyndis of almes ben good. Seynt Jame, in his epistle in the eend, seith thus: *O my britheren, if 66 eny of 3ou schal erre fro trouthe and oon schal converte and turne him, knowe he wel that for he schal make the synner be turnyd fro errour of his wey, he¹ schal save his soul from deeth, and covereth the multitude of hise synnys.* Now forto turne a3en into what y spake of bifore, for the worschipe and reverence of God, and for charite, no man over hastily and over soone iuge and deme, in dispising or blamyng the entent

¹ Not in MS.

and the labour doon in this present book ; lete him abide and take longe deliberacioun, hou ever it schal seme to him nau3t at first. Abide he, unto tyme he have over studied wel bothe the firste and the secunde parties of this book in to the eend, and herkene he aftir, what y write in othere bokis of latyn. And this y seie herfore, that y drede hasti iugementis. Happily summe men whiche han not laborid so moche as wolde be a thrifty labour thoru3 oon day, for conversion of the seid erring lay peple, wolen sette her wittis anoon bifore the
7^a wittis of hem, which han dyvysid and laborid ther aboute by manye 3eris. Suche defautis y fynde in othere causis than this is, and therfore suche defeaute y may drede to bifalle in this. Nevertheles, God is my3ti ynou3 forto protecte and defende this, and so do he for his charite and his goodnes. Amen.

Ferthermore, thou3 in writyng this present book y teche and sette forth mo maters and trouthis of feith than ben nedis necessarie to this now bifore spokun entent and purpos, 3itt therwith no clerk ou3te be displesid, sithen good schal come therbi, and as y hope no greet harme. Forwhi, therbi the seid lay persoonys schulen wel wite and knowe that larger, hizer, and profitabler leernyng and kunning of feith is 3ovun and mynystrid to hem bi this present book, than thei couthen or

myȝten come forto leerne and fynde bi her owne studyng in her wittis, or in her owne bokis, whiche thei han in grete noumbre, or in the Bible, wherynne thei pretenden forto fynde al thing. Also, therbi thei schulen se how fer the wittis of ^{7b} substancial clerkis passen her wittis in mater of feith, and in ech other mater longing to the lawe of God, or to Cristen religioun. Also, therbi thei schulen fele hou necessarie and nedeful it is to hem, that substancial clerkis be in scole of logik, philosophie, and dyvynyte, and that thei have frendschip and aqueyntaunce with substancial clerkis, to be enfoormed and directid bi tho clerkis, and that ellis thei schulen ful ofte and myche wandre a side fro the eeven riȝt wey of trouthe. Therefore it is wel doon that sumwhat more and hizer treting be maad to the seid lay persoonys, than is even nedeful to the bifore writen purpos, and that for those other causis now last givun,¹ as wel as for the fuller leernyng of tho lay persoonys to be hadde. Ferthermore, for as myche as, soone after that y hadde write the book clepid the *Represser*, which is not ȝitt into this present day utterly into uce delyvered, fillen to me manye occupaciouns by sixe ȝeere next thanne folowing,

¹ Not in MS. Apparently the last word has been pared off—the whole clause from ‘writen purpos’ being a correction on the margin.

that leiser was not to me, neither 3itt is forto write
8a in special azens the articlis whiche ben spokun in
the eend of the *Represser*, and left there untretid,
therfore y wole that this present book be take
forth, forto in this maner mete azens alle tho lay
men which holden tho articlis rehercid there, and
namelich the article there rehercid of the Eukarist,
into the tyme leiser schal be to me forto write the
book of the Eukarist.

PART I

CHAPTER I

FATHER, it is myche come into my will bi desire forto learne of 3ou more of feith, than y have leernyd of 3ou in the first party of *The folower to the Donet*, the¹ ch., and in the first partye of *Cristen Religioun*, the tretythe chap. If therfore it be 3oure leiser and 3oure liking, y wolde that 3e answerid to sume questiouns which y schal, if it plese 3ou, aske upon feith or bileeve.

Sone, y vouche saaf that thou so aske and learne, and y schal answer and seie thoruz al this boke, under protestaciouns bi me made, in pro- 86
loggis of myn othere bokis, and that maad also wel for this book, and alle myn othere bokis writen and to be writen as for hem. Wel y wote it is not in my power to kunne al, but while ever y schal lyve, y schal have nede to learne, and in

¹ Where blanks are left the MS. has omitted to give the detailed reference, although space is always left for it.

suche mater wherynne y se not hou and what. And while y schal lyve, y schal have nede to have helpe of felawis in my faculte. And also it schal not ligge in my power forto bisette my wordis in mater which y can, so that thei¹ be not colourabili impugned, and also be chalengid to meene other wise than y meene. And thus it hath be with Austin, and with ech writer before me. Therfore as Austyn in the first chapiter of his iii^e book of the Trinite, bi a long processe, desirith of alle reders and heerers of hise bokis, so y desire for charite and for Goddis cause of alle tho, whiche schulen rede or heere rad the symple bokis which y have write, and schal write in lay
 92 tunge and in latyn. Also, sithen y have chose forto make summe of my bokis in foorme of a dialog, bi togider talking bitwixe the sone and the fadir, y wole loke aftir that tho bokis have the favour which such dialogazacioun or togider talking and clatering ouzte have and may have; which favour, peraventure, sum hasty unconsiderers² schulen not aspie, and schulen therfore peraventure the soner impugne.

But, sone, y wole that thou bere wele in mynde what of feith is seid in the places bi thee

¹ Thei, originally a correction on the margin. Pared off in process of binding.

² Unconsideres in MS.

now alleggid, that feith, of which we speken now, into which we ben bounde, and which is oon of the foundementis of Cristen religioun, is thilke kinde or spice of knowyng, which a man gendrith and getith into his undirstonding, principali bi the telling or denouncing of another persooone, which may not lie, or which is God. Thou³ othere feithis, of which is not the greet charge, mowe be gotten bi telling or denouncing of an othere persooone, which may not lie, or of which it is not likeli that he in so telling or denouncing lieth. As if y learne and knowe this, which y not bifore ^{9b} knewe, that a mayde bare a childe; bicause that God, bi him silf immediatly, or bi an aungel, or bi oon of the apostlis of God hath tolde it, or in sum other wise denouncid it to be trewe, as bi writing, or bi miracle therfore doying, or bi eny other signe occupiying sufficiently the stide of word; thanne this knowyng which y learne and gete to me thus upon this conclusioun, that a mayde bare a child, is suche seid grettist feith. Also, if y learne and knowe this, which y not bifore knew, that thilk child which Marie the maide bare, was and is 3itt man and God, and that for as myche as God himsilf immediatly, or bi an aungel or an apostle of God, hath affeermyd bi word or bi writing it to be trewe, or hath in sum maner denouncid and enformed, bi helpe of

miracle, or in sum other maner, it to be trewe, thanne thilke leernyng and knowing, which y so gete to me upon this conclusioun, that thilk
102a maydes child is God, is to me such seid grettist feith ; and in lijk maner it is of ech treuthe, in to whos leernyng and knowing, after that y it not knewe, y come bi the auctorite of a teller or of a denouncer oonli which is so trewe that he may not lie, and namelich, if the same treuthe be such that y may not bi natural witte suffice forto come into the leernyng, fynding, and knowyng of it, that of ech such trouthe the seid maner of leernyng and knowing is feith ; and bi this maner of his geting and gendring, feith is dyvers from other kindis and spicis of kunnyngis, which a man gendriþ and getith into his understanding bi bisynes and labour of his natural resoun, bi biholding upon the causis or effectis or circumstauncis in nature of the conclusioun or trouthe, and withoute eny attendaunce maad to eny sure teller or denouncer, that thilk conclusioun is a treuthe. And so, if y leerne and knowe tidingis, oold gestis, and governaunces which myn oolde fadris diden,
10b and that bi the telling of such a man, which y knowe bi sufficient likelihood to be a trew teller or a trewe writer, this knowing of these tydingis, or of these oold storial dedis and gestis, is to me credence and feith ; thouȝ it be not in the

kinde of the bifore spokun grettist and worthiest feith.

Ferthermore, sone, y wole that thou considere this, that ech treuthe which a man leerneth and knowith, aftir that bifore this treuthe he not knewe for hardnes or derkenes, muste nedis be of thilk man leerned and knowe bi sum other treuthe, opener, and clerer, and sikerer, than the seid trouthe is. For whi, ellis can no cause or skile be seie, whi the man schulde in eny tyme aftir learne and knowe thilk trouthe, and not as wel bifore, save for this, that now he considerith the other treuthe which is open and cleer to him, and which ledith into the man the knowing of this treuthe, which was bifore derke and unknowen to him. And thanne thus. Sithen thilk cleerli knowun trouthe may not gendre the knowing of this derke or unknowun 11a trouthe, in the mannes resoun or undirstonding, in lasse than thilke cleer treuthe be coupled and applied in the undirstonding of the man to the derke trouthe, and stonde not arumme¹ fro this derke trouthe to bi leerned; and this now seid coupling and applyng may not be maad without two proposiciouns goyng bifore, in teermes and wordis of the bothe treuthis, forto conclude and drive out of hem the iii^e proposicioun, which is the

¹arumme. This spelling differs from that in the *Represser* where the word is *arombe*.

derke trouthe to be leernyd and not erst knowe, as y have sumwhat tauȝt and seid in the biginnyng of the *Represser*, and in the first party of *Iust apprising Holi Scripture*, the chap.; and the coupling togidere of suche proposiciouns in the now seid maner is an argument, which is clepid a sillogisme; therfore nedis this foloweth out of what is now bifore seid, that ech treuthe which a man leerneth and knoweth, aftir that bifore he thilk treuthe not knewe for hardnes and derkenes, must nedis be of thilk man leerned and knowe bi
 116 an argument, which is clepid a sillogisme. And therfore, sithen ech treuthe of feith is a treuthe which a man leerneth and knowith, aftir that bifore he it not knewe for hardnes and derknes therof, it folowith that the leernyng and knowing of ech treuthe and conclusioun of feith muste nedis be hadde and gete bi argument, which is a sillogisme; or bi sum other reducible into a sillogisme, and may not be gete and had, without such seid argument being in the undirstonding of the learner, whilis he it leerneth. Wherefore, sithen the ground and meene, bi which feith is gendrid, is the telling or denouncing of a sure and a trewe witnesser, as it is bifore here seid, and the argument, proceding into the provyng and concluding and schewing of a trouthe, muste go, and procede, and be maad upon the grounde and

meene of the leernyng, therfore the argument
which serveth propirli into gendring and geting of
al feith is this, with suche othere lijke : what ever
thing he tellith or denouncith or ¹

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¹Here two folios are missing, in which the first chapter
ended.

CHAPTER II

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142 -ny evydencis had or hopid to be had into the contrarie, and if suche evydencis be had in the resoun, the resoun muste bi hem be constreyned to consente, and to bileeve the article bi hem, and sithen no evydencis mowe so move without argument—forwhi out of oon proposicioun, bi strengthe of himsilf, no thing folowith, and so nedis twey proposiciouns muste prove the iii^e, and ii proposiciouns² so coupled to the iii^e, mowe not prove the iii^e. but if thei be disposid in foorme of a sillogisme—, and ferther, sithen God, of his gentilnes and of his resonablenesse, puttith not us to a governance whiche we mowe not do, neither which is azens oure kinde, but he helpith forth oure kinde, and perfitith the wirching of oure

¹The question, proposed by the son in the missing pages, seems to have referred to the relation of faith to evidence and the natural processes of reason.

²proposiouns in MS.

kinde, bi his grace sette to oure kinde, it folowith that God arteth us not to eny bileeue, neither we mowe have eny other bileeue, saue it to which we have suche sufficient evydencis as ben bifore seid. And so, sone, as folowyng of the same y seie ^{14b} thus; it is never worthi to be clepid a feith or a bileeve, what ever it be, which is not ground-able and provable by suche evydencis in resoun, and bi suche argumentis in resoun, as ben bifore seid.

Fadir, if al this be trewe, thanne herof folowith ferther thus, that no persone of the laife, neither of the clergie, neither the clergie in hem silf, neither the hool chirche in him silf, ouzte take upon him forto enfoorme and teche eny other persone a bileeve and a feith of any certeyn article, but if he be of power in kunnyng, forto 3eve of the same article suche evydencis as ben now bifore seid, bi which he schal constreyn the resoun of the heerer and of the leerner, to bileeve the same article, rízt as bi the same evydencis he constreyneth his owne resoun to bileeve the same article.

Sone, al this now bi thee drive and concludid folowith so openli out of this that is heere bifore seid, and out of it what schal aftir be seid in the v^e c. of the ii^e party of this book, that it is no ^{15a} nede to make eny more proof therof, if teching

be take more propirli than for a publisching or a nakid uttraunce, telling, or denouncing.

Fadir, it semeth to my resoun out of this to folowe, that if the Cristen clergie were wel avisid of the evydencis whiche myȝten prove her bileeve of ech article, and if the seid Cristen clergie wolden gadere tho evydencis togidere, ordynatli and formabli, in forme of silogismes, forto have redili and currauntli at honde and at mouthe, whanne ever nede were to make bi hem eny profis, and if herwith the Iewis and the Sarracenes wolden ȝeve
 156 audience, for to heere the now seid evydencis to be mynystrid to hem in the seid foorme, and bi sufficient leiser at dyvers tymes, the Cristen clergie schulde convicte, and in maner constreyne, or ellis nede the undirstonding, bothe of alle Iewis and of alle Sarracenes, to bileeve aftir Cristen feith, and to be convertid therto, where thei wolden or nolden ; so that thei wolden ȝeve dewe audience and sufficient attendaunce, to heere and undirstonde the seid evydencis, in the seid maner to be to hem mynystrid, sithen it is seid bifore, that mannys undirstonding and resoun is in maner constreynable or ellis nedeable, to iuge, deeme, and consente bi the evydencis whiche ben mynystrid to him, riȝt as the bodili iȝe is in maner constreynable or nedeable, to iuge, deeme, and consent bi the mynystringis which ben maad to him ; that is to seie, riȝt as the

iȝe may not at his owne lust, iuge and witnesse whether it be whiȝtnes or no, so the resoun may not at his owne lust iuge and deme a thing to be trewe, or not trewe, but he muste nedis iuge aftir that tho evydencis to him mynystrid moven him to deeme ; that is to seie, the resoun muste nedis consente to thilke party whiche notabli hath strengist evydence.

Sone, al this bi thee now concludid y muste nedis 16a
graunte, and so muste nedis ech other considerer graunte. But aȝenward, alas, the Cristen clergie laboren not as ȝitt forto considere clerli what feith is in his owne kinde, and whiche ben the evydencis wherbi it schulde be proved, and forto dispose tho evydencis in cleer formal maner of silogisme, and to have hem redi at mynde ; and in the other side, the feende hath brouȝte in so greet a sleiȝte in the secte of the Sarrasenes, that thei ben ful wondirful violentli lettid, forto ȝeve audience to eny proof making for Cristen feith or making aȝens Sarrasene secte. Forwhi, thilk wickid man Mahumet, which brouȝt in her sect, or sum prelate aftir him, made as for a poynt of his lawe, that no persooone of his sect schulde heere eny declaracioun or evydence of Cristen sect, or eny evydence aȝens his sect, and that undir peyne of passing cruel deeth. But O thou Lord Iesu, God and man, heed of

166 thi Cristen chirche and techen of Cristen bileeve, y
biseche thi mercy, thi pitee, and thi charite, fer be
this seid perel fro thi Cristen chirche and fro ech
persoon therynne conteyned, and schilde thou
that this venom be never brouzte into thi chirche;
and if thou suffre it to be bi eny while brouzt in,
y biseche that it be soone azen out spet. But
suffre thou ordeyne and do, that the lawe and the
feith, which thi chirche at eny tyme kepith, be
receyved and admittid to falle undir this examin-
acioun, whether it be the same verri feith which
thou and thi apostlis tauzten, or no, and that it be
receyved into examinacioun, whether it have suffi-
cient evydencis for it to be verri feith, or no; and
ellis it myzte be holde, 3he and it were a ful
suspect thing to alle hem that schulde be convertid
therto. And also, ellis it were a ful schameful
thing to the Cristen chirche, forto holde such a
feith for a substaunce of her salvacioun, and 3itt
dursten not suffre it to be examined, whether it is
worthi to be allowid for trewe faith or no. And
it were a vilonye putting to Crist, that he schulde
17a 3eve such a feith to his peple, and into which feith
he wolde his peple turne alle othere peple, and 3itt
he wolde not allowe his feith to be at the ful
tried, and that he durste not be aknowe his feith
to be so pure and so fyne fro al falsheede, that
it myzte not bi strengthe of eny evydence be

overcomen. And therfore, Lord Almiȝti, thou forbede that eny such prisonyng of thi feith be maad in thi chirche. For certis, wel groundid cleerkis of thi Cristen chirche mowe kunne gadere suche evydencis, and in suche foorme sette hem, that no persoon in erthe may bi resoun aȝenstonde hem, but that he muste nedis cleve to thi feith bifore, and rather than to eny other pretense feith, or to eny other secte under hevene; ȝhe, and to cleve therto nedis for eny thing appering and seemyng to the contrarie, or hopid to appere to the contrarie. Thus good cleerkis mowe kunne do into greet ioie and counfort of hem silf, and into greet gladnes which thei myȝten helde out into ech persoon of the Cristen chirche, as schal be open bi a book which y hope 17b to make in latyn and to be clepid *The proof of Cristen Feith*. Nevertheles, sone, thou muste undirstonde that whanne an article of feith is to be examyned, whether it be trewe as feith or no, as is the article that God is iii persoonys and oon substaunce, or this that the ii^e persoon of the Trinite bicomē man, or this that he died and roos to lijf the iii^e day, or eny such other article or conclusioun or poynt of feith, thouȝ y knowleche wel that the seid examynacioun of thilk article ouȝte to be maad bi labour of arguyng in oure natural resoun, for as myche as we han noon

other power forto examyne eny thing, whether it be trewe or no, or whether it be feith or no, than oure natural sensitive wittis, and oure natural resoun and her natural worchingis, ȝitt this labour and arguyng and examynacioun, so maad in oure natural resoun, ouȝte not be maad go and falle upon the natural meenys, witnessing the treuthe of
18a thilk article to be trewe, and that thilk article ouȝte be bileeved as feith, as ben natural causis of thilk article, or the natural effectis of the same article, or natural signys or natural circumstauncis of the same article, which naturali stonden aboute the same article ; but this seid labour and arguyng, for examinacioun of the seid article of feith, owith to be maad go and renne upon tho meenys whiche witnessen so likli God to have schewid, or have affermed thilk article to be trewe, that no meenes ben had or likeli ben hopid to be had forto schewe so likli the contrarie ; which contrarie is this, that God the seid article schewid not or affermed not. And thanne, bicause God
may not lie, that therefore thilk article is trewe, and to be bileeved for the infailable and unbigiling treuthe of the affermer, which is God. Of this maner of arguyng, and examynyng, and provyng, is to be undirstonde what is bfore seid, and what
18b is affir to be seid, that ech article of feith may and ouȝte be examyned, whether it ouȝte be bileeved as

feith or no. And ellis but ech article myzte bi this kynde of examynacioun be examined, ellis alle the bifore inconvenientis wolden nedis folowe. And this is ynou3 for eni creature on lyve, forto be moved forto cleve and consent to Cristen feith, and also this is worschip ynou3 for Cristen feith, that it may withoute feere be avowed, and publischid, and be profred to be examyned bi eny witt undir hevene, in such maner of examynacioun now bifore seid, as bi which ech pretense feith ouzte be examyned, whether it be trewe feith or no. And 3itt ferthermore to this now seid, may evydence be this, that ellis Crist wolde never¹ have gove suche a lawe to be hadde, and to be continued in his name, of which lawe sum of oure feith is a party, ne were that it myzte abide the fier of triel and of examinacioun of ech creaturis resoun, so the examinacioun be such as ouzte be takun and usid, forto examine and prove whether a feith pretense be trewe feith or no, as fer forth as eny goldsmyth wole avowe to warante his gold, which he delyvereth to be tried and examyned bi al maner fier of this worldli brennyng. In this kunnyng of examinacioun, and of provyng oure feith, that it is so provable to be trewe, the apostle Petir wolde Cristen men to be namelich clerkis, 1 Pet. iii^e c^r, where he seith thus: *Parati semper*

¹ Supplied from the margin.

ad satisfaccionem reddendam omni poscenti vos racionem, de ea que in vobis est spe et fide. That is to seie in Englisch thus: *Be ye redi forto zilde a satisfyng to ech man asking zou resoun or skile of hope or of feith which is in zou.* In this kunnyng of examinacioun, and of provyng oure feith that it is so provable to be trewe, was Petir Alfons of Hispayn, a ful wise and kunnyng Iewe in al the lawe of Iewis. Forwhi, aftir that he was excellentli leerned in the lawe of Iewis, his wisdom drove him to this that he wolde examyne at the fulle the
196 secte of Sarracenye, also the secte of Cristen men thoruz alle her evydencis, whiche myzten be gete, and so he dide. And bicause that aftir he had examyned alle thre sectis he founde Cristen secte passe alle the othere in evydencis, therefore he forsoke alle the othere and bicaue a Cristen man, and maad a book of disputacioun¹ betwixe Cristen lawe and Iewis lawe, in which booke he knowlechith of him silf what y now have rehercid of him. Nevertheles, y wole not neither meene if azens an article of oure feith, as azens this that iii persoonys ben in oon Godhede, or azens this that the ii^e persooone bicaue man, or azens this that a maide bare the sone of God in his manhede, eny argument be maad, bi meene being out of the boundis longyng to the kindis of feith, as if the

¹ MS. disputson.

argument be maad bi meenys of philosophie, not leenyng to the revelacioun of God anentis the same article, that answere be maad therto for defense of thilke article. Forwhi, the argument gooth not in the wey in which he schulde go, forto be aboute to prove the seid article be not feith. And azeinward, if azens eny suche article argument be maad by meene according to the kinde wherbi feith is to be proved or unproved, as peraventure bi a meene sownyng into this, that God never revelid thilk article, God forbede but that thilk argument schulde be herde of clerkis, and be assoilid, and ellis thilk article is not worthi to be an article of oure Cristen feith, 3he and but if thilk article can be proved bi suche meenys or meene, he is not worthi to be holde an article of oure Cristen universal feith. Wolde God, sad clerkis in divinite wolden weie this wel. Certis, if lay men wolen holde hem content forto bileeve articlis whiche ben famed to be of feith, and bileeve, thou3 thei kunnen not thus prove and defende tho articlis, it is no vilonye to hem ; it is sufficient and allowable to hem. But if clerkis, namelich accountid sad divinis, kunnen not, or wolen not go eny ferther than so aboute articlis of oure feith, thei ben not therynne preisable, neither saven her worschip, neither kepen her dewte forto save oure feith fro perel of his over throwing and distroiying.

Forwhi, if clerkis take not hede, hou and wherbi the articlis of oure Cristen feith owen to be groundid and proved and defendid, such tyme may come, in which adversaries schulen fynde the postis and the pilers of oure feith so unleernyd and nakid, forto meyntene and defende oure feith, that tho adversaries, bi her greet evydencis to be maad withynne the boondis of the kinde perteynyng to feith, schulen perverte myche multitude from feith, and scorn oure feith, and peraventure so it schal be in the tyme of Anticrist to come, for defaute of sad and wel leerned divinis, whiche
 212 schulde thanne be and 3itt schulen not thanne be. And that for the clergie schal more labour aboute worldli kunnyng of lawe, and of wynnyng, and aboute beneficis and worschipsis, than aboute the kunnyng of substancial scole of dyvynite, other than myche such as serveth for sermons in pulpit, which lay men trowen al to be substancial divinitie. Whether such preparaciouns growe now thidirward in clerkis y wole not deeme, but y wole suffre other men to deme. In my side y wole drede and preie. And ferthermore, y wole clerkis to have in consideracioun, that not for a thing is famed to be an article of feith, therfore it is an article of feith, but azenward for that it is an article of feith, and proved sufficientli to be such, therfore it is to be bileeved bi feith. So that

an article to be bileeved bi feith is dependent of this, that it is bifore proved sufficientli to be feith. And an article to be an article of feith is not dependent of this, for that it is bileevyd as an article 21b of feith. No more of this here and now, but lete al the clergie of divinite bese hem silf wiseli in this mater, and kepe her charge and enteresse, leste her necligence schal accuse hem in tyme to come, that bi her neccligence trewe feith was overthrowe, and men fro it pervertid, and that trewe feith was not sufficientli proved and meyntened bi hem, and bi meenys whiche thei leeven in writyng aftir hem, for to bi cleer witt drawe men into consente of trewe feith otherwise than bi fier and swerd or hangement; thouȝ y wole not seie but that the bothe now seid meenys ben good, so that the former meene be parfitli excercisid, eer it schal be come into the ii^e.

CHAPTER III

FADIR, if al this be trewe which 3e han tau3t
sithen y spake bifore last to 3ou, it seemeth
therof to folowe that the mo and the strenger
22a evydencis accordyng to gendre eny certeyn opinial
feith upon eny certeyn article a man have, the
bettir is thilke feith, and the more perfit is thilk
feith, and the strenger is thilk feith, and the more
perfit is thilk feith in his kinde of feith. Forwhi,
the strenger the substancial causis of eny effect
ben, the strenger the same effect is, and sithen the
likli evydencis, schewing that an article is affermed
bi God, ben causis of the opinial feith to be had
upon the same article or conclusioun, it folowith
nedis, that the mo and the more likli tho evydencis
ben had for an opinial feith, the more is thilk
opinial feith, and the perfiter, and the strenger in
his kinde of opinial feith. And bi lijk skile, sithen
the cleer sure expert evydencis, schewing that an
article is affermed of God, ben causis of the sciencial
feith to be had upon the same article, it folowith
nedis in lijk skile that the mo, and the more cleer,

sure, and expert evydencis ben had for a sciencial ^{22b} feith, the more is thilke sciencial feith, and the perfiter and the strengre in his kinde of sciencial feith. Of whiche now spokun ii spicis of feith, that is to seie, opinial feith and sciencial feith, y have maad declaracioun, ground¹ and proof in the first party of *The folower to the Donet*, the ch., and in the first party of *The book of feith in latyn*.²

Forsothe, sone, y can not seie nay, ne y trowe no man alyve, to this that thou hast now dryve and proved, and that for so opene proof which thou hast therto now maad. Nevertheles, therto in wey of confeermyng these to be rehercid evydencis.³ Opiniol feith is not but a certeyn spice of general opinioun, and sciencial feith is not but a spice of general science, as is open bi what is tauzt in the places now alleggid. Wherefore, sithen every opinioun which is not feith, is maad the strengre and the perfiter in his kinde, bi that that the mo, and the perfiter, and the strengre evydencis perteynyng to his kinde ben had, as no wys clerk ^{23a} wole seie nay, it folowith bi lijk skile that every opinioun which is feith, is maad the strengre and the perfiter in his kinde, bi that the mo and the

¹ MS. gorund.

² There is an erasure in the MS. with the title substituted on the margin, but half pared away.

³ The sentence terminates so in the MS.

perfiter and strengre evydencis, perteynyng forto gendre an opinial feith, ben. In lijk maner, sithen sciencial feith is not but a spice of general science, it foloweth that as every science which is not feith is maad the strengre, and the perfiter in his kinde, bi that that the mo, and the perfiter, and the strengre evydencis perteynyng to his kinde ben had, as no wise clerk wole seie nay; so every science which is feith, is maad the strengre and the perfiter in his kinde, bi that that the mo, and the perfiter, and the strengre evydencis perteyning to gendre a sciencial feith ben had. And so, sone, bothe for the evydencis which thou thi silf brouztist forth, and for the evydencis which y have now brouzt forth, y graunte al that thou hast now last concludid.

Fadir, if this be trewe which is of 3ou grauntid, thanne foloweth ferther this, that the geting and the havynge of the mo, and of the more evydencis bi which opinial feith is gendreable, lettith not the merit of a man to have thilk opinial feith, but encresith the merit of thilk man, and in lijk maner the geting and the having of the mo and of the more evydencis, bi which sciencial feith is gendreable, lettith not the merit of the man to
 23^b have thilk sciencial feith, but encreesith it. For-
 whi, for eny feith, in that that it is feith chosen bi the wil, a man hath merit and in this undirstonding

feith is meritorie, as at the ferthest it is able to be acceptid of God, wherfore what ever thing is helpen to cause eny maner of feith in his kinde of feith, and strengthen thilk maner of feith in kynde of feith, thei letten not the merit to be had for thilk feith, neither the merit of thilk feith ; but thei encresen the merit of the man and of thilk feith, folowingli upon that that thei encreesen thilk feith. Forwhi, what ever things founden, gendren, and encresen the grounde, encreesen what thing growth out of the same ground, bi strengthe and vertu of the same ground. But so it is that evydencis, longing to gendre opinial feith, causen, gendren, and holden, and encresen opinial feith, and encresen the willing to have thilk opinial feith. And evydencis longing to gendre sciencial feith, causen, gendren, holden, and encreesen sciencial feith, and encresen the willing to have thilk ^{24a} sciencial feith, wherfore the same evydencis causen, gendren, holden, and encresen the merit of the same willing, and of the same feith which willing and feith thei so causen, gendren, and encreesen.

Sone, y may not seie nay herto, neither y wote who may seie nay therto bi his avisid resoun, and therefore y graunte wel al that thou hast now proved and concludid.

Fadir, thanne ferther thus. If the mo and the more evydencis a man hath, making for an

opinial feith, the more is his mede, and a man schulde rather desire and seche aftir to have the more mede than the lasse mede, so that he lese not therbi so myche or more in an other party of his conversacioun, it folowith herof that a man schulde labore aftir to have manye evydencis to eche article of the feith, rather than to stoond to oon or tweyne evydencis oonli: so that he therbi be not lettid fro an other more good, to be gete and doon in the meene while, and
 24^b so that he holde himsilf redi to bileeve the same article, as soone as he hath eny oon evydence, sufficient to putte him into feith, thouȝ he schulde have no mo. For ellis y can not wite but that he laborid in obstinacie, and also in presumpcioun, as dide Thomas the apostle in the day of Cristis resurrecioun, unto tyme that Crist had weel redressid his obstynacie and his presumpcioun, into sobirnes and sadnes.

Sone, al this now bi thee rehercid and concludid y graunte, and y allowe and confeerme, as thouȝ y hadde seid it to thee bi myn owne mouth. But ȝitt withal, this, what is seid of thee and of me, thou schalt undirstonde accordingly to it what thou maist fynde in *The folower to the Donet*, that no dede of feith, or of opinioun, or of kunnyng, or eny other dede dyvers fro dede of the fre wil, is morali vertuose or viciouse,

meritori or demeritori, but for as moche as the dede of the wil, which commandeth the other seid dede to be had, is morali vertuose or viciose, meritorie or demeritorie, so that the moral goodnes ^{25a} or baddenes, merite or demerite in the dede of the wil, makith the othere dede to be morali good or bad, meritorie or demeritorie, and the goodnes and the merite of the dede in the wil, descendith into the other dede, and 3itt the dede of the wil is not meritorie of blisse in hevene, withoute a grace which is callid accepting grace.

Wel, fadir, sithen 3e conforten me so wel bothe bi 3oure so cleer teching, and bi 3oure so gentil commending, forto cacche witt unto me upon the maters which han betwixe us be mynystrid, y wole argue azens what in this present chapiter 3e han allowid, approvyd, confeirmed and seid. And for as myche as al that 3e han seid, and al that 3e han allowid and confeirmed, of the vertu of feith, bothe in this booke, and in the othere bokis bifore alleggid, is so kunnyngli and so openli led forth and tretid, that y wote not hou eny man my3te be mouyd to speke therazens, by eny resoun and cleernes of witt, therfore y schal move and argue azens 3oure so sad seiying ^{25b} bi a holi mannys writing, and in this wise. Gregorie seith, in his iii^e Omelie, in the beginnyng : *Feith hath no merit, to which mannys resoun 3eueth*

other sure proof or experience, and if othere experience puttith away al merit fro feith, bi cause open experience is grettist evydence, it seemeth that alle other lasse evydence than is experience, schulde bi so moche the more diminisse, and the more lasse the merite of feith, bi hou myche thilke evydence the more neiȝeth to the grettist evydence, which is experience; and bi so myche al evydence schulde the more and the better suffre the merite of feith to be, bi hou myche the ferther it is fro the hiȝest and grettist evydence, which is experience.

Sone, if al were trewe that is of holy men writen, thin argument were the more to be drad. But certis, as thou maist wite in tyme to come, bi that that thou schal wexe into gretter and into depper¹ certeynte of feeling, namelich bi
 26a reding in the eend of the first parti of *Iust apprising of Holi Scripture*, and in the book clepid *The iust apprising of doctouris*, holi men, and ful kunnyng men, at sumtyme fillen upon the treuthe and founden it, and at sumtyme thei faileden from it, whanne thei weneden that thei hadden founde it. And therfore, if her writingis kunne be evydentli unproved, her writingis ben to be left. And tho writingis of hem whiche kunne not be inproved, and unto

¹ So in MS.

tyme thei mowe or kunne be inproved, mowe wel, and ouzte to be holde and be folowid. But, forto come doun in special to examine the now seid alleggid wordis of Gregorie, se thou, sone, how in the same wordis mowe be founde dyverse defautis, forwhi, the said wordis of Gregorie implien and supposen, in her owne vewe, that sum feith ther is, that is had and gendrid bi open experience, and that is azens the same doctouris feeling and writing expresseli, in his iii^e Omelie, upon these wordis of the gospel : *For that thou hast seen me, O Thomas, thou hast bileeved, et cetera ;* 266 where pleynli this doctour wole, feelith, and techith, that a man hath not feith of thilk thing which is of him openli and sureli knowun to be trewe. Wherfore, hise wordis bifore first rehercid, and hise wordis now last rehercid, mowen not stonde togider, and this may not be withoute a defaute. If eny man wole so expowne, glose, and interprete the first bifore alleggid wordis of Gregorie, that the meenyng which Gregorie had in hem was this, that thilk knowing which is gendrid, and had bi sure experience, is neither feith, neither of it is merit, 3itt ther azens is the open pretencioun of the same wordis, whiche callith a knowing, to whom mannys resoun 3eveth experience, to be a feith, and that therfore thilk knowing, to whom mannes

resoun 3eveth experience to be a feith and that
 27a therfore thilk knowing is a feith,¹ and ellis
 it wolde folowe that he spake hem unkun-
 nyngli, or unavisidli, and unwarli, which is
 another defaute. Also that sum knowing, whanne
 it is gendrid bi sure certeyn experience, is feith
 and credence, is proved openli in *The book of
 feith in latyn*, and y doute not that to ech
 diligent considerer what is seid therof in the
 first parti of *The folower to the Donet*, it schal
 be ri3t esili to prove wel the same. Also, forto
 seie that a knowing, had and gendrid upon
 a treuthe bi sure experience, hath no merit, is
 the iii^e defaute. Forwhi, forto not consent, and
 therfore forto not knowe and knowleche a treuthe,
 whanne it is knowe bi sure experience, and for
 that it is so knowun bi sure experience, is un-
 resonable, and therfore viciouse, and so thanne
 demeritori and synful. Wherefore a3enward, forto
 consent, and to knowe, and knowleche the
 same treuthe, whanne it is knowen bi sure
 experience, and for that it is so knowen bi sure

¹ The sentence is very involved and is certainly mistaken. The scribe seems to have been confused here (he repeats himself in the MS.), and to have confused the sense. I suggest 'and that therfore thilk knowing, to whom mannes resoun 3eveth experience, is a feith,' omitting 'to be a feith and that therfore thilk knowing.'

experience, is resonable, and if resonable, thanne vertuose, and so thanne meritorie, and rewardable; for as myche as to every vice the contrarie is a vertu, and to ech vertu the contrarie is a ^{27b} vice. And so nedis in the first seid wordis of Gregorie is founden the seid iii^e defaute. 3he, sone, in other placis where God wole that it be tauzt in latyn, thou schalt openli se, and so thou maist sumwhat now se, if thou wolt, that a man ouzte not have merit for his bileeve, but if he have therto sum evydence forto so bileeve. For ellis, he wote not whi he schulde bileeve it more than the contrarie of it, or more than ech other spekeable thing. And also, forto so bileeve withoute evydence is unresonable, and therfore unvertuose, and so demeritorie; 3he, and it is impossible,¹ as is bifore proved in *The book of feith in latyn*, and in *The folower to the Donet*, and if this be trewe, certis bi lijk skile, so forto bileeve a thing for therto is sufficient evydence that it is so to be bileevyd, is resonable, and therfore vertuose and so meritorie; and if this be trewe, certis therof folowith sureli, that riȝt as grettist vice and grettist demerit in such case, and for such case, is forto bileeve ^{28a} where noon evydence is forto so bileeve, so grettist vertu and merit, as in suche case,

¹ So in MS.

and for suche case, is forto bileeve where grettist evydence is forto so bileeve. And thanne of this folowith ferther, that proporcionabili as the evydcis ben lasse and more neiȝyng to nonne evydence, bi so myche the bileve bi hem taken is the lasse of merit. And as the evidencis ben gretter, and more neiȝing to the grettist and higest evydence of alle, bi so myche the bileeve takun bi hem is the more of merit. And so nedis, upon the first alleggid wordis of Gregorie fallith the iii^e rehercid defaute. If eny man wole seie that Gregori, in thilke first wordis, menede thus, that thilk knowing, which is gendrid and had bi experience, is feith not meritori, anoon is founde this iiij^e defaute, that the first parti of this meenyng now govun is contrarie to the ii^e wordis of Gregori, bifore alleggid in his iii^e Omelie; and upon the ii^e parti of this now govun meenyng, fallith lijk defaute to it, which now bifore is namyde; for the iii^e defaute, and the resounis now bifore maad forto prove the iii^e defaute, prove also this now last defaute, rising upon the ii^e parti of this last

286 govun meenyng. And so y wote not how y myȝt save the first seid wordis of Gregorie from inconvenient and defaute; but if, for affeccioun to the persoonen hem seiȝyng, y schulde close and sequestre the iust doom of resoun, which were

a vice and a synne. And therfore y wote not, sone, hou eny man myzte worthili ground eny argument forto therbi objecte azens eny, of me or of eny other man, 3ovun and tauzt doctrine. And herbi, sone, take thou a marke til thou heere more in othere tymes, that it is not al trewe that bi holi men is in parchimyn ynkid, neither al is profecie that is of good men in pulpit prechid. Nevertheles, al what is writen or seid of hem, it is wel doon forto take, receyve, and bileeve, unto tyme a man can sureli, withoute eny doute, inprove it, and fynde defaute in it, for which it ouzte not forto be bileeved.

CHAPTER IV

FADIR, y dar not argue ferther azens 3oure doctrine bi eny doctouris writing, sithen 3e han smyte so soore a strooke azens the bifore alleggid
29a writyng of Gregorie. For weel y wote, what ever doctouris writing y allegge, if it be azens 3oure bifore maad doctrine, 3e wolen answer that he, or sum man for him, prove his seiying, going azens 3oure doctrine, as cleerli and as evydentli as 3e proven 3oure doctrine, and that he assoile the evydencis whiche 3e maken for 3oure doctrine ; and ellis 3e ou3ten not to his writing, so azens 3oure doctrine meting, forto assente. This y fele wel, that 3e wolden seie bi it what 3e seien 3ou have in *The iust apprising of Holi Scripture*, and in *The iust apprising of doctouris*. And therfore y wole not in waast, in thilke kinde of argumentis, 3ou attempte. Nevertheles, this lettith me not forto argue azens 3oure doctrine bi the wordis of Crist, and bi the wordis of Seynt Poul ; and therfore y bringe forth what Crist seid to Thomas, Joⁿ. 20 c^r. thus : *For that thou hast seen me, O Thomas, thou hast*

bileeved. Blessid ben thei that han not seen and han bileeved. Lo, fadir, hou Crist blamed Thomas, as it seemith, for this that Thomas souzte aftir more evydence to bileeve Cristis resurrecioun than his 29b felowis, the othere apostlis, souzten, in that that Thomas seide : But if y schal se in the hondis of Crist the stiking of the nailis, and y schal putte my finger into the place of the nailis, and y schal put myn hond into his side, y schal not bileeve. Also Crist preferrid in preising, and therfore in thanke, and so folowingli in merite, the othere apostlis bifore Thomas, and this was as it semeth, bicause that the othere apostlis helden hem content, and souzten not aftir so greet evydencis for her bileeve upon Cristis resurrexioun, as Thomas dide. Wherefore it semeth that forto seche aftir the gretter evydence, to prove and confeerne a bileeve, where that lasse grete evydence wole suffice, is not preiseable, but blameworth. And if this be so, thanne forto so seche aftir tho greter evydencis lassith the merit of the same bileve. Also, Luk. 1 c^r, Zacharie the fadir of John Baptist was punyschid bi doumbenes, for that he hilde him not content with the evydencis, which he had bi the aungel Gabriel, that 30a his wyf schulde bere a childe whos name schulde be Johnne. And so, fadir, the seching aftir evydencis, as it semith, taken away, or at the lest abateth the vaile and the merite of feith.

Sone, take good hede to the same processis which thou hast now forth spokun ; and marke you weel therwith this what y schal seie, and thanne thin obiecciouns schulen be assoilid. First, considere thou that these iii casis ben dyvers, and not oon ; that is to seie, a man forto not holde him content with evydencis sufficient to gendre in him a feith, but forto seche aftir othere and grettir evydencis, and ellis forto not bileeve in the seid feith ; and a man forto be content with evydencis sufficient to gendre a feith, forto bileeve in the same feith, and 3itt to seche aftir grettir and mo evydencis, into confirmacioun of the same feith ; and a man forto holde him content and paied with sufficient evydencis unto a feith, and to not seche eny ferther for evydencis, gretter or mo, into the con-
 306 firmacioun of the same feith. Certis, sone, the first case is openli reprovab, the ii^e and the iii^e ben allowable and preiseable. In the first case weren the Iewis anentis Crist, whiche wolden not bileeve into Crist for sufficient evydencis, which Crist 3ave to hem forto so bileeve, but thei sou3ten aftir grettir, and mo evydencis, eer thei wolden bileeve as it is open, Mt. xii^e chap^r. and xvi^e c^r. ; Mr. viii^e c^r. ; Luk. xi^e c^r. ; Johnne vi^e chap. And in lijk case was Thomas, in the day of Cristis resurrexioun. Forwhi, not withstanding that he hadde sufficient evydencis forto bileeve Cristis resurrexioun, 3itt

he wolde not bileeve bi hem, but he souzte aftir gretter evydencis, and seide as is bifore rehercid in this present chapiter thus ; *But if y schal se in the hondis of him the stiking of the nailis, et cetera.* And therfore Crist blamyd him, not as for that he souzt aftir grettir evydencis oonli, but for that he helde him not content with other sufficient evydencis, to bileeve Cristis resurrexioun, but he ³¹² souzt aftir gretter evydencis, eer than he wolde bileeve ; and therfore he was worthi be blamed, as he was blamed, whanne Crist said thus ; *For that thou hast seen me, O Thomas, thou hast bileeved, as thou3 Crist hadde seide thus : Not withstanding thou haddist bifore sufficient evydencis to bileeve, thou woldist not bileeve, but for that thou hast seen me thou hast bileeved.* That Thomas had sufficient evydencis bifore forto bileeve Cristis resurrexioun, eer Crist schewid to him hise hondis and hise feet, y may prove thus. We now lyvyng han sufficient evydence forto bileeve Cristis resurreccioun bi this, that the apostlis han denouncid to us that Crist roos fro deeth ; and we mowe have sufficient evydencis that the apostlis weren trewe and trusty men, and not liers. But Thomas hadde thanne these same evydencis in as good maner, or in better, than we han now for us. Forwhi he herde the apostlis denounce Cristis resurrexioun to him, bi her owne mouthe, there that thei denouncen the

same to us bi her writing ; and also he knewe bi experience the treuthe, and the sadnes, and the unbigilefulnes of hise felowis, where that we knowen it bi likelihode oonli, thou3 so likeli that to the contrarie we have noon evydence so likeli. Wherefore, if we ben bounden now forto bileeve Cristis resurrexioun, as for therupon sufficient evydence to us had, even so moche, or more, Thomas was bounde, eer Crist apperid to him, forto bileeve Cristis resurrexioun, for sufficient evydence therupon to him mynystrid bi his trewe britheren, whom he ful likeli knewe to be no liers. And so folowith that Thomas was in the first case, and worthi to be blamed, as he was blamed of Crist. In the first case also was Zacharie, Luk. i^e c^r., and therfore he was punyschid. Certis, if thei hadden be in the secunde case, or in the iii^e,
 32a thei hadden not be blamed. The x apostlis weren in the iii^e case, and therfore thei weren not blamed, but thei weren commendid of Crist, whanne he seid thus : *Blessid be thei, that is to seie, thi felowis, the othere x apostlis whiche han not seen, that is to seie in thilk maner as thou hast¹ seen, or namelich in thilk maner as thou desiridist to se, and zitt thei han bileeved, holding hem content, for that without thilke now seid sizt thei hadden sufficient evydence forto bileeve my resurreccioun.* Ferthermore, sone, as

¹ MS. haast.

manye riȝt wise men trowen, the seyng, of which it is spokun in this processe, was the touching in whiche Thomas touchid Cristis side. And that, for as myche as undir name of siȝt or seyng may be comprehendid and undirstonde the dede of ech other outward witt, bi cause that the siȝt is the principal outward wit, and therfore his name may be transumed in to the name of ech othere outward witt. And bi so moche the bettir is holpen al myn now maad answer, that Thomas souȝt over miche evydence, eer he wolde bileeve; notwithstanding that, without this last sei yng, my seide answer is sufficient. Now, sone, forto come neer to thin argumentis, in thin argument, thou pretendist as thouȝ Thomas hadde be in the secunde case, and therfore Crist hadde blamed him, for ellis thin argument schulde not go aȝens my doctrine. And certis, y denye that Crist blamed Thomas therfore; but y seie, as y now bifore seid, that Thomas was in this first case, and for it Crist blamed him, and this is no thing aȝens me. Thanne ferthermore, whanne thou seidist in thin argument that Crist preferrid the othere apostlis, in preising, and in allowing bifore Thomas, y graunte weel this. Nevertheles, thou assignyst not the al hool cause whi Crist so preferrid; for whi, the hool cause of this preferring was that the othere apostlis helden hem content forto bileeve,

32b

without seching aftir eny mo evydencis, eer thei wolden bileeve; but Thomas helde him not
 33^a content with the same evydence which hise felowis tolden to him, but souzt aftir grettir, and ellis he wolde not bileeve, and herof thou makist no mensioun in thin argument, and in thin assignyng, as for the blame of Thomas. And therfore y denye it forto be the hool cause of preferring, which thou assignyst to be therof the hool cause. And what is to be seid of Zacharies blame is open in lijk maner now bifore. Ferthermore, sone, thou schalt undirstonde that the article which Thomas, first bifore he sawe the woundis, wolde not bileeve, and which, aftirward he hadde seen tho woundis, he bileeved, was not this, that this man was rise fro deeth into lijf; for therof he had in maner experience, but it was this that Crist, that is to seie God being man, was risen fro deeth in his manhode, into lijf in his manhode, into which bileve of thilk article helpid wel, as therto a meene, the experience had bi Thomas of the woundis, which Thomas sawe in thilke manys persooone and quik
 33^b bodi; and that this is trewe may be take weel here of, that Thomas aftir that he had seen, and was profrid to him for to touche the woundis, seid thus: *O my Lord and O my God*. And so al is assoilid, what thou hast bi thi gospel azens me obiectid.

Fadir, 3e seiden bifore in the secunde¹ c^r., that whoever have sufficient meenys to gendre a feith upon eny certeyn article, he muste nedis, wil he, nyle he, bileeve thilk article. Forwhi, 3e seide that his undirstonding schal be nedid to so bileeve, bi strengthe of tho evydencis. And now 3e seien here that Thomas and Zacharie hadden sufficient meenys forto bileeve bi hem, and 3itt thei not so bileeveden bi hem; wherfore, fadir, it wolde seme that oon of youre doctryns is contrarie to the other.

Sone, thou3 it seme so, it schal not be founde so. Forwhi, thou schalt wite that there ben dyvers maners of having a thing, as Aristotil spekith in his book of Predicamentis. Nevertheles ii maners ther ben of havynge, pertenyng to this present purpos. It is seid of a good^{34a} scoler that he hath his lessoun in his herte, and in his undirstonding, and in his consideracioun. It is seid commounli of a badde scoler, that he hath his lessoun writen in his book, thou3 he have it not in his herte, and in his consideracioun of undirstonding. Lo, sone, ii maners of having, and therefore, sone, whanne y seide bifore in the secunde² c^r. as in sentence thus: *Who ever have sufficient meenes to gendre a feith upon eny article, he must nedis bileeve thilk article bi the*

¹ From the margin.

² From the margin.

same meenes, it is to be undirstonde of such maner havyng, wherynne a man hath the seid meenys in consideracioun of his resoun, and in weiyng hem weel, hou and hou myche thei ben able to move into feith and credence, and not of such a maner of havyng, wherynne a man hath hem oonli in heering mynystrid to him, without the taking hem into deepe consideracioun of resoun.

34^b But Thomas hadde not, and toke not the evydence of Cristis resurrexioun, but in the ii inperfit seid maner, eer than Crist apperid to Thomas, and schewid his side to Thomas. And if Thomas hadde take in the bigynnyng the evydence into deep consideracioun of his resoun, to se and fele hou myche thilk evydence schulde move into feith, no doute but that Thomas, standing in thilk receyte of evydence, muste nedis have bileeved. And so, sone, thin obieccioun is asoilid, and the worschip of my doctrine is saved. And ferthermore, thou maist se that a man may weerne, bi dedis of his wil, sufficient evydencis for feith, mynystrid to hise eeris, or to hise i3en forto come so ny3 into his resoun, that thei move myche the resoun. And in this maner it is to be undirstonde, what that holi Austyn seid as in sentence thus: *Thou maist be drawen to the fonte azens thi wil; thou maist be baptisid azens thi wil; thou maist speke these wordis, y bileeve, et cetera, azens thi wil. But*

bileeve maist thou never, but with thi wil. But not- 35^a
 withstanding all this, 3itt if a man bi his wil suffre
 sufficient evydencis of feith forto entre sufficientli
 into resoun, and if he bi his wil suffre hem move
 the resoun as myche as thei ben able to move,
 certis, he schal not, ne may not, azenstonde but
 that he schal consente to hem in his resoun, and
 bileeve bi hem in his resoun, wil he, nyle he :
 and thus myche is ynou3 for answeare to thin
 obieccioun.

Fadir, what seie 3e thanne to the wordis of
 Poul, Hebr. xi^e c^r., where he seith thus : *Feith is*
the substaunce of thingis to be hopid, and an argument
of thingis not appering. Wherof y argue thus. If
 feith be of thingis not appering, it folowith that
 feith is not of thingis cleerli seen, and sureli
 knowun.

Sone, y seid bifore that ther ben ii maners of
 feith. Oon is opinial feith, and this is he which we
 and alle Cristen han, bi the comoun lawe of God,
 whilis we lyven in this lijf ; as Poul therto
 accordith in an other place, i Cor. xiii^e, seiying 35^b
 thus : *Now we seen in a myrrour in uncerteynte ;*
thanne, forsothe, that is to seie in hevene, we schal se
face to face. Another feith is sciencial feith, and
 thou3 this feith may be had bi specialte in this
 lijf, 3itt it is not comounli had in this lijf, but it is
 had in the blisse of hevene.

Sone, Poul in the place bi thee alleggid,
Hebr. xi^e c^r, spake of the first maner of feith,
which is opinial; for so it was moost convenient
him forto speke, in as myche as it, and not
the other, is to us necessarie in this lijf, and
he meened not of sciencial feith, and so thin
obieccioun gooth not azens myn entent.

CHAPTER V

FADIR, y undirstonde wel what maner of kunnyng, or of knowing, 3e han clepid feith, and that bothe in the first party of *The folewer to the Donet* (or *keye*), the xii^e ch^r., and also in this present book, in the first ii^e chapitris. Nevertheles it were good to wite what evydence, and hou grete evydence, 3e have forto so clepe and holde. And whether feith muste nedis be suche a kynde 36a of knowing as 3e holden it to be, or no.

Certis, sone, that feith is such a knowing as y have tau3t feith to be, in the first chapter of this boke, and in the place bifore alleggid, in *The folewer to the Donet*, these mowe be the evydencis. Feith may not be seid to be other than sum kinde of kunnyng, or of knowing, as ech man wel feelith, but so it is that alle kindis of knowyngis ben noumbrid, and sette forth in the divisioun or particioun of knowing, into hise parties of kindis, in the first parti of *The folower to the Donet*, the x^e c.; wherfore feith muste nedis be oon of tho membris, or of tho kindis there sette and noum-

brid, and noon of tho membris, parties, or kindis of kunnyng, kunnen be convenientli clepid feithis, save tho whiche there and here ben clepid feithis, as soone may to ech witt appere and be clere. Wherefore, myn holding and my teching of feith, what feith is, is trewe : and not oonli trewe, but it
 36^b muste nedis be so, and in noon other contrariouse or dyvers wise. Also thus, thilke kindis of kunnyng which y have assigned to be clepid feith, owen to be clepid undir summe names of kunnyng, propirli, and dyverseli, and severalli fro alle othere kindis of kunnyng ; and certis ther ben noon names to hem so according or nameli, no more according than to be clepid opinial feith, and kunnyngal or sciencial feith ; wherefore thilke kindis of knowing owen forto be so clepid. Also thus the seid kindis of knowing which y have clepid feith, mowe, accordingli and convenientli ynou³, be clepid feithis, as no man kan seie no cause whi not so thei mowe convenientli be clepid. And ferthermore, forto putte more convenientli, or so convenientli, eny othere feithis than thei ben is no nede, neither forto eny othere feithis putte is eny grounde in resoun or in Scripture, and al that is not groundeable in resoun or in Scripture, is not as for this purpos evydent to be holde, as it may be
 37^a open bi what is often seid bifore in this present

book, and in the first party of *The folower to the Donet*. Wherfore, not oonli it is allowable and sufficient forto so putte and holde as y have putte and holde, but it is better and more convenient forto so putte and holde, than forto putte and holde in eny contrarie maner. Namelich for thei that holden the contrarie maner, ben dryven herto bi her resoun forto seie that feith is a knowing of a thing, not bi strengthe of evidence in the undirstonding forto so bileeve requirid, but bi assignement of the wil; so that the wil of a man schulde bidde him bileeve, and therefore knowe an article, and cleve therto more stideli, than he cleeveth to eny thing which he knowith bi grettist evydence and surest argument in his resoun, and aftir that the wil is strengier or febler in so assignyng or comaunding to cleve, so the feith and the knowing is the strengier or febler; which forto so seie and holde is abhominable; 3he, and forto holde it azens a good arguer it is impossible, as is touchid bifore in this book, and in 37b the first parti of *The folower to the Donet*. Nevertheless, sumwhat more schal be seide here thus. We seen that stidefastnes of clevyng is oft tyme as greet to a fals article as to a trewe, as we seen in obstinat heretikis, which cleven as stifli to her fals heretik articlis, as othere men cleven to her trewe articlis, whiche God tau3t to be bileved.

Wherefore folewith that stidefastnes of cleuyng is neither kinde or spice of certeynte, or of knowing, neither it is eny condicioun propre to feith, or making that a knowing be feith, sithen this stablenes of cleaving is as wel to falshede¹ as to trouthe, and therfore it is not to the purpos of trewe feith forto speke of it. Also nedis cost this is trewe, that to thilk thing we more stidefastli cleven, fro which thing we bi gretter hardenes us departen; but so it is that bi gretter hardenes we departen us fro kunnyng of the thing of whiche we have science and kunnyng bi certeynte, than fro feith of the thing

38a which we oonli bileeven in this lijf. Forwhi, fro such feith we seen men al day hem departe, and fro science or fro certeyn kunnyng of the thing which thei certeynli kunnen, thei mowen not hem departe. Wherefore, this is false that gretter stiddefastnes and stablenes of to cleevyng is in feith than in science. Also, that the wil schulde assigne what schulde be a trewe knowing, and which is not a trewe knowing, is fer bisidis the power and the wirching of the wil, as to ech good philosophir it is lizt forto se, and is open bi *The folewer to the Donet*; wherefore the seid holding of the seid doctouris is not therynne to be folowid. Also, summe of hem fantasien that as lizt of the

¹ 'Fashede' in MS.

sunne, hild abroad upon a colour and the ize, makith the ize to se the colour, and is the formal cause whi the colour is knowun, so God him silf, which is first trouthe, hildith him silf abroad as a list upon the article to be bileeved, and upon the undirstonding and the wil of him which schulde bileeve, and therbi the undirstonding and the wil hath suerte of the trouthe bileeved, thouȝ not ^{38b} cleerte of the trouthe bileeved. O God of mercy,¹ wherfore schulde this fantasie serve better in his forging, if it schulde be trewe, thanne forto make that ech article bileeved bi feith schulde be more cleerli seen than eny bodili ize seeth cleerli eny colour, and more cleerli knowen of the undirstonding for the excellence of the list, even as the article is more stidefastli knowen for excellence of the same list. Also, thei seien that bi feith a man more sadlier cleeveth to an article than he dooth to eny treuthe, wherof he hath surest demonstrative proof; and ȝitt he hath lasse evydence to so bileeve than to so kunne the othere open treuthe; and ȝitt also herwith, that the Godhede hilded out upon the article and the inward ize is the list wherbi is the clevyng of the undirstonding to the article so stronge, and ȝitt therwith the knowing is so litil and so derk; which alle now seid thingis, if thei ben wel ^{39a}

¹ MS. O God mercy.

considerid, schewen hem silf not oonli to be childeli fantasies, and ungroundable fyndingis, but also including falsehedis and repugnauncis.¹ And what is all this, save a witnessing that thei couthe not seie, neither teche verrili, what feith was or is ; but thei gropiden afer after forto wite what feith is, and thei not it wisten. Manye othere conclusiouns thei holden, that feith and cleer kunnyng of oon and the same article mowe not stonde togider in oon mannys undirstonding. Thei seien also that verri opinial feith may not be in the blisse of hevene ; whiche seiyngis ben improved as cleerli as it nedith eny seiyngis be improved.

Fadir, sithen 3e han tau3t, in *The book of Priesthode*, in the beginnyng, what the chirche of God is, and also 3e han tau3t in the first parti of *The folower to the Donet, or the key of Cristen religioun*, and in this present book, what feith is, y wolde learne what ordre is to be putte bitwixe feith and the chirche ; that is to seie, whether the chirche is bifore feith, or that
39^b feith is bifore the chirche.

Sotheli, sone, forto answeere to this questioun, philosophie wole serve ful wel, and that bi these ensaumplys. Stones and mortar in hem silf, without more, ben not a walle, forwhi tho stones and mortar my3ten be, whanne thei ben scaterid

¹ MS. repūgnāūcis.

abrood, and thanne thei were no walle; neither the ioynyng, neither the schap of the stoones and of the mortar togider is the wal. Forwhi, thilk ioynyng and oonyng and schap is not hard, neither neische, neither eny dede may do, wherto a wal is ordeynynd. Wherefore the wal is, or maad of bothe stones and mortar as of his material cause, and of the ioynyng and comyng togidere of hem with her schap as of his formal cause; or ellis the wal is the stoones and the mortar, whilis, whanne, and as thei ben ioyned togidere into a certeyn forme and schap. And in lijk maner, stones, mortar, and tymbir ben not¹ in hem silf an hous, for thei myȝten be and schulden be, thouȝ thei weren scaterid abroad; neither the schap and the ioynyng togidere of hem in a certeyn maner is the house. Forwhi, thilk schap schulde ful yvel kepe out theeves, or eny other effect wirche, which forto wirche the house was ordeyned, if ne were therto stoones, mortir, and tymber. Wherefore the house is maad of stoones, mortar, and tymber, as of his material cause, and of the coupling, and ioynyng, and schaping of hem togider in a certeyn maner, as of his formal cause; or ellis, certis, the house is the stoones, mortar, and tymber, whilis, whane, hou and as thei ben in the seid certeyn maner togider ioyned. In lijk maner

¹ MS. no.

it is that the peple in hem silf, withoute more, is not the chirche of God. Forwhi, the same peple myȝten be, and schulden be, thouȝ thei were hethen, or Iewis, or in eny horrible maner heretikis, contrarie to the oonyng into God. Neither feith in it silf is the chirche of God. Forwhi, feith can neither do, ne suffre, ne wirche what forto do
 406 and suffre the chirche of God is ordeyned.

Wherfore the chirche of God is maad, of the peple as of his matreal cause, and of feith as of his formal cause; or, at the leest, the chirche is the seid peple, not as the seid peple is in hem silf, but as, and hou, and while, and whanne, and where, the peple is ioyned and coupled togider in oon feith tauȝt from God.¹

Now, sone, out of al this y argue ferther thus. Every cause is bfore the thing causid of him, and every thing making an other thing, is in ordre and processe, thouȝ not alwey in tyme, bfore the other thing maad. But so it is that feith is cause of the chirche, and makith the chirche to be so, namelich that without feith the chirche is not, in so myche that without feith the peple is no chirche, and the chirche may not make such feith, as is schewid

¹The following inset is written on the lower margin of the MS.: 'Nevertheles in the maner of undirstondyng al this which is goven in the other boke of feith in latyn in the partye, the c.'

after in the v^e c^r. in the ii^e party of this book. Wherefore the feith is in ordre and processe bfore the chirche, as a cause is bfore his effect. And thanne ferther thus. The chirche is not in being of a chirche but if he have feith, and he hath not ^{41a} feith, but for that he hath receyved thilk feith fro God in the maner bfore tauzt, in the first chapiter; wherefore the chirche is not a chirche, but bi this, that he hath receyved, in the bfore tauzt maner, feith fro God. Thanne ferther thus. The chirche is not the chirche, in lasse than he receyve his feith in the seid maner fro God, and the chirche knowith him silf to be the chirche, wherefore folowith that the chirche knowith him silf have receyved his feith in the seid maner fro God. And folowith ferther, that the chirche knowith not him silf to be a chirche, in lasse than he knowe him silf to have receyved his feith in the seid maner fro God. But so it is, that he knowith not him silf, ne ouzt knowe himsilf forto teche autentikli feith to eny persooone, but in as myche as he is a chirche; wherefore he knowith not him silf, ^{41b} neither ouzte knowe him silf forto teche autentikli, or bi autorite of maistrie to eny persooone, in lasse than he knowe him silf to have receyved the same feith fro God, in maner of arguyng bfore seid, bi oon of these meenes of which oon is this, Holi Scripture witnessith and denouncith this conclu-

sioun, notwithstanding that it is above the natural power of resoun aloone forto fynde it and knowe it. An other is this:—a myracle is doon in to witnessing of it. Another is this:—holi chirche this hath bileeved for feith in tyme of the apostlis, and fro thens contynueli hiderto. That tho seid evydencis mowen prove likeli an article to have be receyved of God, or of the apostlis, y may argue thus, and upon the first evydence y make this argument. What ever article, or conclusioun, being above the fynding of oure resoun, without therof a teller, and a witnesser or denouncer, God tellith
42a and denounceth, is to be take as feith; but so it is that what ever such now seid article or conclusioun Holi Scripture tellith and denouncith, God tellith and denounceth; wherfore ech such now seid article, or conclusioun, or trouthe, is now to be take for verri feith. Upon the ii^e evydence, y foorme this argument. What ever such now bifore seid article or conclusioun is witnessid bi God, is to be take for feith. But so it is that what ever such now seid article or conclusioun is witnessid bi myracle, moche semyng to be Goddis miracle, and aȝens which no man kan notabili repugne that it is not myracle doon bi God, is to be take as for witnessid bi God, for perel of the contrarie taking. Wherfore ech now seid article or conclusioun, witnessid and affermed to us bi such now seid

myracle, is to be take for good verri feith. Upon the iii^e evydence may be maad this argument. What ever such now seid article was tauzt of Crist, or of the apostlis for feith, is now to be taken as feith, but every article which the chirche in tyme of the apostlis helde for 42b feith, was tauzt of Crist, or of the apostlis for feith ; wherfore the seid article is now to be taken for feith. Lo, sone, this argument is a good sillogisme, and the first premysse nedis is to be grauntid, and the ii^e premysse is moche probable, and likli, for his notabili greet evydence, and no man kan gretter evydence bringe into the contrarie. Wherfore, unto tyme that the contrarie of this ii^e premysse can openli be improvid, or ellis unto tyme to the contrarie be gete more likeli evydence, than is the seid ii^e premysse in him silf, the conclusioun of this argument is nedis to be holde for trewe, that the seid article is feith.

CHAPTER VI

FADIR, 3e han seid bifore in this present book, that oure natural resoun¹ with his sillogising hath so greet interesse in mater of feith, that without dome of oure natural resoun, and without a sillogisme, 43^a wel reulid and necessarili concluding, and provyng this or that to be trowid as feith, we mowe not have of this, or of that witnessid bi God, or bi a sureli trewe creature, eny feith. Also, in the first party of the *Represser*, and in the first parti of *Iust apprising Holi Scripture*, 3e han seid that resoun, which is a sillogisme wel reulid aftir the craft tau3t in logik, and havyng ii premyssis, openli trewe and to be grauntid, is so stronge and so my3ti in al kindis of maters, that thou3 al the aungels of hevene wolden seie that his conclusioun were not trewe, 3itt we schulde leeve the aungels sei yng, and we schulden truste more to the proof of thilk sillogisme, than to the contrarie sei yng of alle the aungels in hevene, for that alle Goddis creaturis musten nedis obeie to doom of resoun,

¹ 'Reson' in MS.

and such a sillogisme is not ellis than doom of resoun.

Sone, al this y seid, and al this ech wel avisid man muste nedis seie. Forwhi, ellis creaturis of God myȝten verrifie contradiccoun, and thilke ^{43b} power is not grauntid creaturis to have, for thilk power is not to be grauntid God to have.

Fadir, thanne thus :—if alle aungels in hevene musten nedis obeie to such a sillogisme, and we schulen rather trowe to suche a sillogisme, than to alle the aungels in hevene, if bi case that alle the aungels in hevene schulden seie aȝens it, what such a sillogisme concludith, and proveth, and Goddis chirche in hevene is more stable and lasse bigilable than is Goddis chirche in erthe, it semeth folowe herof that bi like skile, or ellis moche rather and bi strengre skile, if the chirche in erthe determine aȝens it, what such a sillogisme concludith, we schulen rather trowe and holde us to thilk sillogisme, than to the determynacioun of the chirche in erthe. Forwhi, what ever is strengre than the strengre, is strengre than the febler to thilke lasse stronge. Riȝt as what ever sufficith to overcome the overcomer, sufficith to overcome the ^{44a} overcomen of the same overcomer.

Sone, y graunte al that thou hast concludid and dryven forth, and so muste nedis every wel avisid man graunte in his undirstonding, withynne forth,

wil he, nyle he. Forwhi, the proof therto is so stronge. Nevertheles, sone, of this that y now have grauntid to thee, folowith not that the chirche in erthe errith, or may erre in mater of feith, no more than folowith of my graunt, that the chirche now in hevene errith or may erre in feith.

Fadir, y have herde sum men¹ bere upon Poul, that he meeneth the determynacioun of the chirche in erthe to be preferrid, and to be more bileved than the determynacioun, or the according consent of the chirche in hevene, in case if these ii chirchis schulden dyverse and varie bitwixe hem silf. Forwhi Poul seith, Galat. i^e c^t., thus : *But thouz we*
 44^b *or aungel of hevene preche to 3ou, bisidis that that we han prechid to 3ou, be he acursid. As y have seid bifore, and now eftsoone y seie, if eny preche to you bisidis that that 3e han undirfongen, be he acursid.* Lo, fadir, it wole seme bi these wordis of Poul, that he preferrieth what the chirche in tho daies tauzt for feith, bifore that that the chirche of aungels schulden teche, in case that the chirche of aungels were contrarie to the chirche in erthe, in the same teching. Forsothe, fadir, this can not be weel born in the laife ; but redili, whanne this is affermed bi summe clerkis, it doith harme, and nedis muste bi liklihode do riht moche harme, if it schulde be oft and openli avowid. Therefore, fadir, forto avoide

¹ MS. sūmen.

the comyng of suche harmes to the clergie,
and to the chirche of God, y preie 3ou seie
3oure avise.

Sone, it ou3te not be taken bi the seid
wordis of Poul, that he preferrid the holding or
the determinacioun of the chirche in erthe, bfore
the holding or the determynacioun of the chirche 45^a
in hevene. Forwhi, the chirche in hevene is not
oon aungel, but it is manye thousind of thousind
aungels, and Poul in the seid wordis spekith not
of manye aungels togider, but singulerli of oon
aungel. Wherfore it folowith that Poul makith
no menciuun here of the hole chirche being in
heven; and if Poul makith here no mensioun
of the chirche in hevene, it folowith that he
preferrih no thing here to the chirche in hevene.
Also, in the seid first chapiter to Galathies, Poul
spekith of his owne persoone, and of the gospel
which he in his owne singuler persoone receyved,
bi revelacioun of Iesus Crist, and not bi man, and
therfore not receyved bi the chirche in erthe, as
is open in the same chapiter. But so it is, that
Poul, in his owne persoone, was not the chirche
in erthe, for the chirche in tho daies hadde
alle the apostlis, and manye othere worthi clerkis,
and holy men convertid into the feith; wherfore, 45^b
of thilk first chapiter to Galathies may not be
taken that Poul makith mensioun of the chirche in

erthe, and therfore it may not be taken, that there Poul preferrith the chirche in erthe to the chirche in hevene. That Poul spekith of his owne singuler persooone, and not of the hool chirche in erthe, lo hou he seith thus : *Britheren, y make knowe to zou the evangelie which was prechid of me, for it is not bi man, ne y took it of man, ne leernyd, but bi revelacioun of Iesus Crist.* Lo, sone, sithen the gospel which Poul receyved, not of man, but bi revelacioun of Iesus Crist, and therfore which he receyved not of the chirche in erthe, neither of the chirche in hevene, he preferrith above what eny oon aungel, and what eny oon man in erthe schulde preche in to the contrarie, hou may it be take herof that Poul preferrith in credence the
46a chirche in erthe, bifore the chirche in hevene? Certis, if eny wole holde nedis that Poul meeneth, or makith mensioun here, of the chirche in erthe, and of the chirche in hevene, it wole folowe thanne of Poulis wordis, that the gospel which Poul receyved not of man, but bi revelacioun of Iesus Crist, and therfore not of the chirche in erthe, neither of the chirche in hevene, he preferrith bifore bothe the chirche in erthe, and the chirche in hevene, if so it myzte be that the chirche in erthe, or the chirche in hevene wolde teche contrarie to the seid gospel, which Poul receyved bi revelacioun of Iesus Crist. And so if Poulis processe

in the seid firste chapter to Galathies¹ be wel considerid, it dooth no thing for preferring in credence of the chirche in erthe above the chirche in hevene ; but it dooth rather that Poul preferrieth the seid sillogisme, had in certeynte, above the determynacioun of bothe seid chirchis. Forwhi, in that that Poul hadde the gospel revelyd to him bi Crist, Poul hadde this sillogisme in his resoun :— ^{46b} what ever God affeermeth to be trewe is nedis trewe, and so trewe, that it is to be preferrid in credence above what the chirche in erthe, and the chirche in hevene may determyne into the contrarie. But so it is that this gospel, which y preche, God affermed to me in revelacioun ; wherfore it is trewe, and so trewe that it is to be preferrid bifore al the determynacioun of the chirche in hevene, and bifore al the determynacioun of the chirche in erthe, if eny such determynacioun schulde be into the contrarie. The first premisse of this sillogisme is openli trewe to ech man, and of the ii^e premysse, Poul hadde sure experience, and ful certeynte. And therfore, as it is bifore tauzt, in the secunde chapter of this book, he must nedis, bi strengthe of the sillogisme, have so greet certainte upon the conclusioun of the sillogisme, that alle the creaturis in erthe and in hevene schulden not mowe move him out of thilk

¹ MS. gathies.

certeinte, which he had upon the same conclusioun;
and more or other than this now seid, may not be
47^a had of Poulis wordis there. And certis, herbi it is
wel confeirmed what is seid bifore in the secunde
chapiter.

CHAPTER VII

NEVERTHELES, y dare wel this seie, and avowe, and this reverence y 3eve to the chirche in erthe, that whanne ever the chirche of God in erthe holdith eny article as feith, or hath determyned thilk article to be feith, every singuler persooone of the same chirche, hou wise ever he be, and hou digne and worthi ever he be, is bounden, undir peyne of dampnacioun, for to bileeve thilk same article as feith, and so therynne forto obeie to the chirche; 3he, thou3 the chirche therynne bileeved or determyned falseli or amys, but if he can, evydentli and openli without eny doute, schewe, teche, and declare that the chirche bileeveth, or hath determyned thilk article wrongli and untreuli, or ellis that the chirche hath no sufficient ground for to so bileeve or determyne. 3he, and thou3 the chirche schulde bileve or determyne amys, 3itt therof schulde not this persooone be blamed of God, but schulde be ful excusid, 3he, he schulde be rewardid and medid in hevene. That this is ^{47b} trewe, y prove thus. If the apostlis were now

lyvyng, and weren heedis of the cleergi, as thei weren in the biginnyng of Cristen chirche, the lay peple were bounden, undir perel and peyne of dampnacioun, forto obeie to the teching and to the determynnyng of the apostlis upon feith ; but so it is that, bi cause the apostlis myȝten not bi kinde alwey in this world lyve, forto teche feith and meyntene the doctrine of feith, and ȝitt continuaunce of teching the feith, and bidding that feith be leernyd, had, and kept, may not be lackid and unhadde, in eny tyme of the world, therfore successouris weren ordeyned to the apostlis ; that is to seie, bischopis and preestis weren ordeynyd forto succede to the apostlis, and forto occupie the stide of the apostlis, in teching feith, and in meynntenynge the teching of feith. Wherfore folowith that, as the lay peple now lyvyng weren bounde forto in mater of feith obeie to the apostlis,

48^a if the apostlis now lyveden, so the lay peple, now lyvyng, ben bounde forto obeie in mater of feith to the bischopis and preestis, now to the apostlis, and aftir the apostlis succeding, and the placis of the apostlis occupiynge, in lasse than the peple now lyvyng kouthen object aȝens the bischopis and preestis now lyvyng, sureli and without eny dout, that thei erren in bileeve, and techen and bidden amys about bileeve. This argument takith his strenthe herof, that in waast schulden eny per-

soones be ordeynyd successouris to othere former persoones, as in waast schulde a king now lyvyng succede to his fadir, in making the lawe of the lond be kept, but if the peple now lyvyng were bounde forto obeie to him in hise comaundis aboute the lawe keping, as thei were bounde forto obeie to his fadir in his comaundis aboute the lawe keping, thouȝ the fadir of this king were moche holier man than this is; in lasse than the now ^{48b} bifore excepcioun kouthe be maad undoutabili. And in waast schulde oon abbot succede to an other abbot in a monasterie of monkis, but if the monkis ouȝten obeie to the successoure aboute the rewle keping, thouȝ the predecessoure were an holier man than is his successoure, in lasse than the monkis couthen allegge for hem, sureli and undoutabili, that the successoure errid in his teching and bidding maad to hem. In lijk maner it is bitwix the citeseyns of Londoun and the meirs of Londoun.

This same now bifore maad argument may be maad in cleerer foorme thus. Whanne ever eny successouris ben ordeynyd, leefulli and expedientli, forto in eny cause or mater succede to certeyn predecessouris, tho persoonys upon whiche these predecessouris¹ and successouris ben so ordeyned, ben bounde forto, in thilk cause and mater, obeie

¹ MS. predessouris.

to the successouris, as thei weren bounde forto obeie to the predecessouris, in lasse than the
 49^a personys, whiche ben requirid forto obeie, kunnen make and allegge for hem, and prove undoutabili for hem, the bifore seid excepcioun. Forwhi, ellis in waast and in veyn tho successouris schulden be ordeynyd, forto succede to the seid predecessouris¹ upon the seid peple. But so it is, that the apostlis weren predecessoris to the bischopis, and preestis now lyvyng, upon the lay peple in cause and mater of feith teching, and of comaunding feith to be leernyd, kunne, and kept, as no man wole denye, for Crist it seide, Acts i^e c^r., that the apostlis schulden be witnessers to him in al the lond of Iewri, and in al the lond of Samarie, and unto the ferthest coostis of the erthe; and also ground therto is hadde open, M^t. the last chapiter, in the eend, and M^r., the last chapiter in the eend. And herwith it is trewe, that bischopis and preestis weren ordeynyd forto be successouris to the apostlis, bi doom of resoun, and bi the wil of God, in the causis and maters in which the apostlis
 49^b weren predecessouris, as it is proved openli in *The book of the Preest hood*, the c^r., and in the iii^e parti of the book clepid the *Represser*. Wherefore nedis folewith, that the peple now lyvyng undir bischopis and preestis, in the cause and

¹ MS. predessouris.

mater now seid, ben bounde bi doom of resoun, and therfore bi the lawe of God, and bi also the wil of God, forto obeie to the bischopis and preestis now lyvyng, in the seid maner succeding, in the cause and mater now seid, in lasse thanne thei kunne make the bifore spokun excepcioun. Also into this same purpos y argue thus. God made not the chirche of aungels in hevene without a disposicioun,¹ and a reule, and an ordre, hadde bitwixe hem, and not without this, that the netherer and louzer aungels, in thilk disposicioun and ordre, schulden take her leernyng and informacioun of the othere aungels overer to hem in thilk disposicioun, as Seynt Denyce, the disciple 50a of Seynt Poul, and ful greet clerk, openli techith in his book of the *Hevenli Ierarchie*, and also in his book of the *Chirchis Ierarchie in erthe*, the last chapiter. Wherefore myche rather, forwhi for myche more nede, God made not his chirche in erthe forto contynue withoute a disposicioun, and an ordre to be hadde bitwixe parties and persoones of the same, so that the lower persoones, in thilk disposicioun and ordre, ouzten receyve her leernyng and her informacioun of the overer persoonys to hem, and ouzten obeie therynne to thilk overer persoonys to hem. Also

¹ MS. disposioun, here and in following instances of the word.

thus; sithen Poul seith, Hebr. vii^e c., thus, *Whanne preesthode is translatid, it is nede that the lawe be translatid*, et cetera, no man may seie nay, but that Poul meened preesthode to be in the new law, bi the wil and purpos of God, and that the preesthode of the newe lawe succedith to the preesthode of the oolde lawe, as the newe
506 lawe succedith to the oold lawe, and ellis these translaciouns, of which Poul spekith, were not doon. Also, thou mayste not seie nay, but that prestis in the oold lawe weren able forto faile and erre thanne in the teching and determynyng feith and pointis of the lawe, if preestis of the newe lawe ben able forto faile and erre now in teching and determynyng feith, and pointis of the lawe now being. And if this be trewe of these two translaciouns and successiouns, no man may seie nay, but that the lay peple of the newe lawe ouzte receyve her leernyng of feith, and the expownyng and the declaring of the feith, fro the preestis of the newe lawe, and forto obeie to the preestis therynne, if the lay peple of the oolde lawe ouztiden receyve her leernyng of feith, and the expownyng, and the declaring therof fro preestis of the oolde lawe. Forwhi, forto teche the lay peple the feith, and al the lawe of God for the tyme being, was¹ the preestis in evereithen tyme of

¹ So in MS.

tho lawis ordeynyd bi God. As for the preestis of the oold lawe, it schal anoon aftir be schewid, ^{51a} and as for the preestis of the newe lawe, it is open, Mathew the laste chapiter, and Mark the last chapiter, in the eendis of hem, and in the epistlis to Thimothe, and to Tite, in dyvers chapiters.

And thanne ferther with this thus. But so it is that the lay peple, in tyme of the oolde lawe, weren bounde, undir perel of greet synne, for to receyve her feith, and al the leernyng of Goddis lawe than being, in ech doute or hard poynt of the same feith and lawe, of and fro the preestis of the oolde lawe, and forto therynne obeie to the preestis, as anoon schal be schewid. Wherefore folewith, that eke the lay peple of the newe lawe is bounde, undir perel of greet synne, forto receyve her feith and al the leernyng of Goddis lawe, now beyng, in ech doutable and strivable poynt therof, fro and of the preestis of the newe lawe, and forto obeie to hem therynne, in lasse thanne the case of the seid excepcioun kan be executid, which excepcioun was also bi doom of sufficient resoun ^{51b} undirstonde bitwixe the lay peple, and the preestis in tyme of the oolde lawe. That in tyme of the oolde lawe, the lay people was bounden forto obeie to the preestis, in the maner now bifore seid, may be proved bi a faire processe writen, Deut. 17 c^r., which is this: *If thou perceyvyst that hard and*

doutable doom is as bitwixe blood and blood, cause and cause, lepre and not lepre, and thou seest that the wordis of Iewis¹ withynne thi 3atis ben dyverse, rise thou and stie to the place which thi Lord God hath chose. And thou schalt come to the preestis of the kyn of Levy, and to the iuge which is in that tyme, and thou schalt aske of hem; which schulen schewe to thee the treuthe of doom. And thou schalt do what ever thing thei seien, that ben sovereyns in the place which the Lord chese, and techen thee bi the lawe of the Lord. Thou schalt sue the sentence of hem; thou
52a *shalt not bowe to the riȝt side, either to the lift side. Forsothe thilk man schal deie, which is proud and nyl obeie to the comaundementis of the preest that mynystrith in that tyme to thi Lord God, and to the sentence of the iuge; and thou schalt do away yvel fro the myddis of Israel. And alle the peple schal here and drede; that no man fro thennes forth bolne with pride. Thus moche there. This same conclusioun now bifore proved, Denyce witnessith in his owne foorme, as in party and into thilk entent he made his book of the Chirchis Ierarchie in erthe. Confirmacioun ful strong and unbrokeable to this present argumentis, and into this same conclusioun, is the teching of Poul, R°. 13^e chap., fro the bigynnyng forth bi a notable processe, in which processe he seith that ech soule ouȝte obeie and be sugget to the*

¹ Corrected on the margin to 'iugis.'

potestatis sette over him, and that ther is noon such ordeynyng but of God; and therfore, who ever azenstondith and not obeieth to such potestatis, he azenstondith and unobeieth to God. Lo, hou 52b substanciali Poul spekith into this present purpos. Certis, thouz the wordis of Poul, in the place now alleggid, were not sufficient forto confeerne the bifore maad argumentis, and this present principal purpos, zitt the bifore going argumentis in hem silf proven sufficientli the purpos.

And thanne, aftir alle these thus bifore going argumentis, y argue ferther thus. Sithen who ever bi ful avisement azenstondith God, and his ordynaunce, puttith him into dampnable synne, and perel of dampnacioun, it folowith that who ever avisidli azenstondith, and unobeieth the prelatis of the chirche, in cause and mater of feith teching, and leernyng, and fulfilling, without the seid excepcioun, he therynne synnyth deedli and dampnabili. Wolde God that lay peple hadden in her modir tunge the epistlis of Seynt Ignace, the blissid and holi martir, and disciple of Seint Johnne evangelist, and whom Denyce hath in comendacioun bi writing in his book of Goddis Namyngis. For 53a certis, red y never in no mannys writingis, so tendirli charchid, the obeischaunce to bischopis and to preestis as is there in his writing ofte chargid. How holi a man he was, and hou greet

a doer in the chirche, in tho daies, and bischop, 3he, patriarke of the greet Antioche, may be rad in a storie ioyned to hise epistlis, which storie was writen in tho same daies bi a persoon which knewe sureli, as he there knowlechith, al the persecucioun of Ignacis martirdom. Ech man and woman¹ therfore be ware, and bise himsilf hou he stondith in the point of this present purpos. For feithfulli forto seie, manye which holden hem silf ful cleene from dampnable synne, and ful perfit lovers and keepers of Goddis lawe, ben, in as myche as y can deme, in the now tretid and spokun dampnable synne, so that, for al her glorie of her conscience, thei stonden in case of the gospel, that
53^b a litil sowrdou3 in her soule corruptith al the lumpe of her conversacioun and servyce to God. And therfore, to alle hem in vertu of Fadir and Sone and Holi Goost, y seie the wordis of the apostle writen, i. Cor. v^e c^r., thus: *Witen 3e not that a litil sowredou3 corruptith al the gobet. Clense 3e out therfore the oolde sowrdou3, that 3e be newe springing togidere.* And forto seie ferther, manye persoonys han suffrid deeth bi greet devocioun and zele to God, and his lawe in her maner, but 3itt in the now seid unobedience azens the prelatis of the chirche, the more sorewe and deel is, whom y couthe not excuse, and defende fro wey of dampnacioun,

¹ MS. wōmā.

thou3 y schulde deie, but if y couthe excuse hem therfro, and that for the skilis now bifore maad. Thou3 ful manye undiscreet and unwise persoones, for unconsideracioun of the now maad skilis, holden tho sufferers of deeth to be holi martiris. Alas upon this, and alle othere such blindenes. Can eny man trowe otherwise than that Arri, and Sabelli, and Novat, and Donat, and Pellagi, and alle 54^a the othere oolde heretikis, hadden greet zeel and devocioun to God and his lawe in her maner, in that that thei helden her heresies. Certis nay, forwhi it my3t not ellis be trowid that so greet leernyd men, and so holi men in othere governauncis, as the abbot Pelagi, and the abbot Eutices, and the bischop and patriarke Nestorie, helden her opiniouns of heresie bi witing that tho opiniouns were azens the felyng of the general chirche, without this that thei couthen prove undoutabili her parti azens the general chirche, and that undir peyne of deeth, and that thei in so witing wolden abide and suffre her condempnacioun of general counseils, but if thei hadden such seid greet zele and devocioun. And therfore no doute is but that thei, with greet zele and devocioun, helden her opiniouns with strong unobedience to her prelatis, whanne thei couthen not allegge for hem the bifore spokun excepcioun azens her prelatis.

And 3itt y wote weel that thou man,¹ which
 54^b holdist the now late brenned men in Ynglond to
 be martiris, wolte seie that the othere now named
 oold heretikis weren in dampnable synne, notwith-
 standing al her holines in other sidis, and her
 devocioun, which thei hadden in holding and
 mayntenynge of her synguler opiniouns, a3ens the
 teching of the chirche. Wherefore, bi and for
 strengthe of even lijk skile, thou ou3tist nedis cost
 holde al tho, whiche thou hast herd be brend in
 Ynglond, in unobedience a3ens her prelatis, to
 passe and deie in dampnable synne, as bi the
 comoun lawe of God, notwithstanding al her
 holi lyvyng in other sides, and notwithstanding
 al her devocioun had to her opiniouns, and forto
 suffre deeth for hem; 3he, more forto seie, thou3
 it hadde be so that her seid opiniouns hadden
 be trewe. For verrili and in trouthe, to seie
 wherof y am sure, noon of hem couthe prove
 undoutabili the bifore seid excepcioun for his
 defense a3ens his prelatis, for noon of hem
 55^a couthe prove that his opinioun, for whiche he
 a3enstode his prelatis, was trewe, as y wote
 wel undir greet perel of my soul forto so seie.
 Certis, but if it schulde be trewe that alle

¹ As Pecock kindles to his argument, he inclines to forget the dialogue with its didactic tone, and substitutes an argumentative monologue.

suche unobeiers to the prelatis, and ierarchis of the chirche, schulden synne dampnabli, ellis in waast eny ierarchiing¹ schulde be ordeynyd, or be purveied bi God to be in his chirche. Forwhi, ech yvel disposid man, hou ever yvel he were disposid forto holde opiniouns, or forto use governauncis, myzt rebelle azens the ierarchis in the chirche, and disturble the ierarchiing of the chirche; that is to seie, the ordre holding in the chirche bitwixe persoonys in overte and netherte, and zitt therynne be holde gilteles, for pretencioun and for stryvyng that he holdith the treuthe and kepith vertuose governaunce, thouz he couthe not prove and schewe it to his prelatis. And what were this but an abhominable filthehede in the chirche, and a wey forto make ech man to be obstinat to his prelatis, in what ever cause 55^b him schulde like, and forto be excusable fro punysching and redressing; zhe, and forto make it fals, which holi and wys and passing clerk Denyce, the disciple of Poul, and wel acqueyntid with Seynt Ion the evangelist, seith in his book of the *Chirchis Ierarchie*, that in hevene bitwixe aungels is manye foold ordre of overte and netherte, and obedience of the netherers to the overers, and so Crist wold that his chirche schulde be so ierarchied in erthe, bothe forto be like to the

¹ So in MS.

chirche of hevene above, and also for nede of good reule, which ellis myȝte not be in the chirche in erthe, and that Crist bigunne this ierarchiying, in making the apostlis, and wolde that thei schulden make it ferther, bi good resoun and discrecioun. And therfore, as y seid bifore, allas and out upon so greet blindnes in hem, which pretenden hem to be of more kunnyng than other in Goddis lawe, and clepen hem silf therfore knowing men. Verili to seie, this
 56^a pride and presumpcioun stynkith bifore God; ȝhe, and peraventure more than the synnys of othere men, whiche thei in her hertis bittirli condempnen. And if y schulde seie my feling, peraventure the unobedience of Adam and Eve was not so myche gilty, neither the pride of Lucifer; but whether this be trewe or no, y remitte it to God; but herof y muste holde me sikir, that if Lucifer and Adam were in dampnable synne for her pride, and presumpsioun, and unobedience, forsothe as forto iuge bi the comoun lawe of God, ȝoven to alle Cristen men, alle the now bifore spokun aȝenstonders to prelatys of the chirche ben, for thilke aȝenstonding, in dampnable synne, and ellis the seid comoun lawe of God were not trewe.

CHAPTER VIII¹

PERAVENTURE sum man of this now spokun soort of peple wole seie thus : *Al this is trewe, what is now concludid in the next bifore goyng chapiter, if the chirche errid not in mater of the feith in which y contrarie² the chirche. And therfore y wole al redi 56b obeie, consent, and bileeve, as the al hool clergie of the chirche bileveth, thouz thilk al hool clergie myzt faile in the same mater, in which we accorden and consenten to hem; so nevertheles that thei therynne in dede now not failen, and ellis y wole not consent and accorde with hem in bileeve of thilk mater. Thanne to ech of hem which so wolen seie, y speke now, and resoun thus. If the chirche erride not in tho maters of feith, in which thou variest fro the chirche, which maters ever thei be, thou were bounde, undir peyne of dampnacioun, forto therynne obeie the chirche, as thou thi silf nowe*

¹ In this chapter the form of the book completely changes, and a Lollard takes the place of the son, without his privilege of questioning.

² The MS. has 'not' faintly marked for excision.

grauntist. And so it is that if thou knowe not that the chirche errith in tho maters, thou maist not seie and holde that the chirche errith in tho maters, wherfore folewith nedis, that if thou knowe not that the chirche errith in tho maters, thou art bound, undir peyne of dampnacioun, forto
 57^a therynne obeie the chirche, and confeerme thee to the chirche. The first premysse of this argument thou thi silf hast now grauntid, and it is al redi bifore proved. And that the secunde premysse of this argument is trewe, y prove thus. If thou kan not prove, cleerli and undoutabili, by eny of the weyis expressid in the ii partye of this boke, that the chirche errith in the seid maters, thou knowist not that the chirche errith in tho maters; but so it is that thou, what lay man ever thou be of the seid soort, canst not prove that the chirche errith in the seid maters, thanne folewith nedis that thou knowist not that the chirche errith in the seid maters, and so the secunde premysse which was to be proved, is now proved. If thou seie that thou canst prove, cleerli and undoutabili, that the chirche errith in the seid maters, y ask of thee, to whom canst thou it prove; whether to thi silf oonli, or to othere men. If thou seie, to thi silf al oon, thanne makist thou thi silf iuge in thin owne cause,

and forto so do it is over myche perilose in maters of lasse charge than these ben. And y^{57b} trowe that thou woldist not counseil eny man forto trust his owne witt al oon, in eny other mater lasse than this mater is; wherfore thou maist not, without greet indiscrecioun, holde that thou canst make this now seid proof, for that thou trowist thee to kunne make it to thi silf al oon.

Also, aʒens thi seiying, y aske whether thou art wittier and kunnynger in these maters than eny other man is, or ellis, whether summe othere men ben therinne as witti and as kunnyng as thou art, or wittier and kunnynger than thou art. If thou be wittier and kunnynger than eny othere men ben in tho maters, and thus witty and kunnyng in tho maters thou art not, neither maist be, but for gretter and strenger evydencis which thou hast in tho maters than eny othere men han, folewith that it schal be in thi power, bi strengthe of tho evydencis, forto teche, cleerli and undoutabili, thi parti to summe othere men, as bi tho evydencis thou tauʒtist so undoutabili thi silf, and brouʒtist thi silf fro^{58a} the parti of the chirche, into the parti which thou now holdist aʒens the chirche. Also folewith that the evydencis, bi whiche thou art moved and holdist thi parti in tho maters, ben strenger

and gretter than ben the evydencis whiche eny othere men, or the chirche, hath forto holde his parti in thilke same maters. And if this be trewe, bringe thou forth thilke evydencis bi mouthe speking, if thou dare appere, or ellis bi writing if thou dare not appere in speking; and thanne muste nedis come therof, bi like skile, as tho evydenes for her so greet strengthe nediden thee, and maden thee forto consente to thi parti in the seid maters, whether thou woldist or no, thei¹ schulen and musten nedis and make the seid othere men, and the chirche forto consente to the same party, and forto forsake the contrarie parti, whiche thei now holden, in the same seid maters. Forwhi, thin intellect, or resonable power of the soule, is of the same
586 nature and kinde of which othere mennes intellect or resonable power is. And thilk power whether it be in thee, or in eny other man, is of such nature and kinde, that he is not fre forto consent or discent, stonding the evydencis movyng him; but he muste nedis consent to thilk parti, into which the strenger evydencis moven him, as is bifore tauzt in the secunde chapiter of this book, and moche clerer in the first parti of *The folower to the Donet*. And so, if thou hast suche evydencis, wherbi thou

¹ Not in MS.

canst prove to thi silf undoutabili that thi parti, which thou holdist in the seid maters, is trewe, thanne in bringing forth into open tho evydencis, thei schulen so move othere men, as thei moven thee ; wherfore folewith azenward, that if tho evydencis mowe not so moche move othere men, neither the chirche, thou hast not at thi silf such evydencis, bi which thou canst prove at thi silf, and to thi silf, undoutabili and cleerli, thi parti to be trewe which thou holdist contrarie to the chirche, and that the chirche errith in tho maters. If thou knowleche that thou passist 59^a not alle othere men in the kunnyng of these maters, but othere men ben therynne as witti and as kunnyng as thou art, or kunnynger, whi schalt thou thanne truste to thin owne witt in tho maters, more than to her witt in the same maters? Thou maist not it clayme. Forwhi, whanne ii spectaclis ben like cleer, what thing may be wel seen bi the oon, may be like weel seen bi and thorou³ the othere. Also, whether thou passe alle othere men, or summe othere men passen thee, thin evydencis if thei be of such strengthe in thee as thou pretendist, thei musten be of such strengthe in othere men as thei ben in thee, whether tho men ben wittier and kunnynger than thou art, or like witti and kunnyng with thee, or lasse witti and lasse

kunnyng than thou art, and that for the skile, and proof, and argument, which is now here bifore goyng.

Thus moche is argued azens thee, if thou seie that thou canst prove cleerli and undoutabili, to thi silf oonli and al oon, thi parti azens the
 59^b chirche. If thou seie that thou canst prove cleerli and undoutabli¹ thi parti to othere men, certis thanne if tho men ben not wiser and wittier than thou art, and canst not so prove to men wiser and wittier than thou art, thi pretendid proof is litil to be trustid to, or nouzt. But forto seie larger thus: whether tho men ben wiser than thou art, or like wise, or lasse wise, sithen thou canst not so prove without evydencis whiche musten nedis move men into consent and graunt, folowith that with tho evydencis thou schalt so nede alle the seid othere men, that, wil thei, nyle thei, if thei heere and attende to thin evydencis bi sufficient evidences² bi sufficient leiser, and bi setting away of lettingis to perceyve hem, thei schulen consent and graunt thi parti. And azenward, if tho evydencis schulen not so moche move and nede othere men thus avisidli attending, folewith that bi tho evydencis thou

¹ MS. error, 'unabedientli'; 'undoutabli' from the margin.

² 'bi sufficient evidences'; marked for excision, but not finally corrected.

canst not prove cleerli and undoutabili thi parti
and opinioun to the same othere men. And
thanne ferther, if this be trewe that thou hast such 60a
so stronge and cleer evydencis as thou pretendist
and knowlechist thee to have, and bringist hem
not forth into open, bi word or bi writing, and
therfore overcomest not othere men, and the
chirche therbi forto consent and graunte thi
party, and forto forsake her errour, thou art in
dampnable sinne and schalt be dampned. Forwhi,
Holi Scripture seieth: *He that seeth his brother suffre,*
and closith hise entrelis from him, hou is there charite
of God in him; whiche wordis if thei meenen¹ lak
of charite to be in such a case anentis a brother
suffring bodili nede, moche rather thei meenen
lak of charite to be anentis a brother in goostli
nede. And so it is proved, bi this processe now
here bifore rennyng, that if thou canst not prove
cleerli and undoutabili the chirche erre azens
thi parti, thou art in dampnacioun forto holde
azens the chirche; and azenward, if thou canst
prove it cleerli and undoutabili, thou art in
dampnacioun, for that thou conquerist not othere 60b
men and the chirche. Sithen it is proved that
thou maist so do, if it be trewe that thou
canst prove cleerli and undoutabili what thou
pretendist and knowlechist thee kunne so prove.

¹ MS. meenyng.

Now if y schal sette to al this what y have in experience, I seie thus. I have spoke oft tyme, and bi long leiser, with the wittiest and kunnyngist men of thilk seid soort, contrarie to the chirche, and which han be holde as dukis amonge hem, and which han loved me for that y wolde pacientli heere her evydencis, and her motyves, without exprobracioun. And verrili noon of hem couthe make eny motyve for her parti so stronge as y my silf couthe have made therto. And noon of hem couthe make eny motive which schulde meve a thrifti clerk nedis into concent, but ech thrifti sad clerk in logik, philosophie, and divinite, schulde soone schewe her motive to be over feble to be a cleer and undoutable proof. And if y may not herynne be bileeved of hem, write thei her evydencis and motyves
 61a in which thei trusten, and thei schulen se bi writyng azen, that thei kunne riȝt litil maistrie do for her party, ȝhe, moche lasse than good clerkis kunnen for her party do. Ceese thei therfore, and leve thei werk, for y wote weel thei hewen above her heedis, and weenen that thei han more and clerer siȝt in kunnyng, thanne thei han, or mowe have, without clergie or greet helpe of clerkis.

If thou seie here for thee and thi felawschip thus : We musten nedis be excusid that we turnen

not 3ou clerkis and the chirche, ri3t as 3e holden excused that 3e turnen not hethen men, 3he, and that 3e not turnen us. Nay sir, not so, and good cause y schal seie whi. We mowe not turne hethen men, neither 3ou for this, that thou3 we wolden write cleerli oure evydencis and profis to hem and to 3ou, neither thei, neither 3e wolden rede hem, or attende sufficientli forto examine hem, and weie hem, as thei ou3ten be weel weied and attendid, if thei schulden sufficientli move. But thei and 3e wolden refreyne hem silf and 3ou silf fro al such studie aboute tho evydencis, as it 61b is openli knowe, thou3 3e peraventure wolden a superficial and an over rennyng reding 3eve therto, which may not in such a case suffice. Forsothe, in contrarie maner, it is with clerkis and with the chirche, that what ever evydencis or motyves hethen men, or 3e, or eny heretikis han write, or schulen write a3ens clerkis and the chirche, thei wolen take tho motyves into as greet diligence of studie and of examynacioun and of weiyng, as thei wolen eny othere motives which thei han for her parti; 3he, thei hem silf wolen be aboute forto fynde and make motives a3ens her party with 3oure party, and with the parti of hethene men, and with the parti of heretikis, as fer, and as moche as al her kunnyng and power, which thei han, mowe strecche. In this wise hath

the clergie, and the chirche of Cristen men be disposid ever, as scole writingis in divinite schewen at ful; and in such disposicioun thei wolen be, 62a y dout not, while this world schal dure. Forwhi, ellis thei couthe not make excercise in scole of divinite, as thei musten nedis make, and also ellis thei musten leeve up the scole of divinite in universitees. But so doon not hethen men, neither 3e. For, among hethene men, it is so that who ever makith eny motyve or argument azens what is holden of hem, he schal be crueli doon into deeth. Among 3ou, it is so that 3e holden a foli forto stodi in eny motives, writen or spoken azens 3oure opiniouns. And therfore a greet skile of dyversite is whi we ben excusid, if we turnen not hethen men, neither 3ou. And 3e ben not excusid, if 3e turnen not us and the chirche, whilis 3e pretenden and knowlechen that 3e han kunnyng ynou3 forto turne us, and we ben benevole ynou3 forto receyve, heere, and rede 3oure motyves, and forto examyne hem; 3he, and forto fortifie hem and strengthe hem better than¹ 3e 3ou silf kunnen.

62b If 3e asken who y am, which makith him so bisi here azens 3ou, forsothe, he is the man which hath more laborid and doon into 3oure goostli availe, as of trewe kunnyng to be had of 3ou, and

¹ MS. that.

errour to be removed fro 3ou, than 3e 3ou silf ben of kunnyng, and of power, forto so do to 3ou silf. In more special forto seie, he is the man which for 3ou, and for alle lay men, hath write in lay mennys langage these bokis; *The Forcrier, The Donet into the book of Cristen Religioun, The folower to the same Donet, The boke of Cristen Religioun, The Provoker, The Represser, The book of signis in the chirche*, which y clepe *The boke of worschiping, The boke of leernyng, The booke of filling the iiii tablis*, this present *Book of Feith, The book of Preesthode*, with summe othere mo, whiche bokis, if 3e wolen rede diligentli, and attende therto studioseli, and be wel acquyentid with hem, and not forto take an hasti smel or smatche in hem, and soone leie hem aside, 3e schulen fynde in hem so greet witt, and leernyng of Cristen religioun, 63^a that 3e schulen holde 3ou bigilid in the trust which 3e had bifore in 3oure othere studies, and laboris for leernyng. And 3e schulen se that so fer the wittis and kunnyng of clerkis passen 3oure wittis and 3oure leernyng in maters of Cristen religioun, that 3e schulen not truste so moche to 3oure kunnyng as 3e now doon; and 3e schulen truste more to the kunnyng of clerkis, and seche bisili to have her helpe and counseiling in tho maters, than 3e have bifore this doon, and 3e schulen chastise 3ou silf ful wel, and ful vertuoseli, fro

pride and presumpcioun bifore had, in setting and
 in apprising 3oure leernyng and kunnyng in
 maters of Cristen religioun, bifore the leernyng
 and kunnyng of clerkis, and of the chirche,
 as 3e bifore this han doon. And 3e schulen kepe
 3ou heraftir, that 3e stert not up into such pride
 and presumpcioun, but 3e schulen love clerkis of
 the chirche, and seche aftir her comunyng, and
 63^b love hem, and thei schulen love 3ou, and teche 3ou
 in tho bokis, and moche ese and ioie and good lyf
 schal come therbi, and moche vice, which cometh
 ynne for defaute of such goostli occupacioun, schal
 be eschewid; and therfore, into leernyng of the
 seid bokis, God Almy3ti bringe 3ou. Amen.
 Forsothe, summe of the kunnyngist men of 3oure
 soorte, aftir that thei han red of summe of these
 spokun bokis, and han take, bi notable tyme,
 assaie and acqueyntance in hem, han hungrid and
 thirstid, forto have hadde the copie and the
 contynuel uce of tho bokis to hem, as moche as
 ever thei hungriden and thirstiden aftir mete and
 drinke. Thou3 peraventure, at the first blusch of
 reding of hem, tho bokis apperiden not to be such,
 for in sodeyn chaungis from oon mete to an
 other mete, and from oon drinke into an othere
 drinke, beyng moche dyverse, 3he, from eny oon
 custom longe bifore contynued into an other
 custom moche dyverse, men ou3ten not truste to

her first into hem comyng semyngis ; but thei ^{64a} musten abide and contynue bi counsel of resoun, til a newe semyng be brouzt forth.

Also, ferther in this arguyng and pleding begunne, y may procede thus. If it so be that the chirche errith in the maters, into whiche he is so bisi forto knowe arizt, and that bi manye yeeris, and bi manye helpis of persoonys, and bi so greet meenys leding into kunnyng, above al that lay men mowe strecche to, the chirche muste nedis be excusid of God. Forwhi, the chirche dooth al that he can do therynne, and al that he may do therynne. Forwhi he seeth not, neither can se where and hou he schulde seche ferther or better, forto come into the trewe kunnyng than he now seeth, and wittingli and willingli he takith not to him eny lette, which he knowith to forbarre the wey into sufficientli to be hadde trewe kunnyng. And alle men musten nedis knowleche that God askith no more of eny man of witt than what he can and may ; wherfore no man may seie but that the ^{64b} chirche, so longe tyme and ever laboring, and avising forto come into treuthe, is excusid or were excusid, thouz it were so that the chirche, bi ignoraunce, and bi such unpower as is to now be spokun of, erre ; zhe, and not oonli the chirche is excusid, but over it the chirche plesith, and serveth, and deserveth mede anentis God bi thilk feith,

thou³ it were untrewe, as fer forth as thou³ it were trewe ; forwhi it must be so that the chirche, bi thilk feith, offendith God or plesith God, trespacith to God or serveth to God, sithen ech dede, doon bi choice of wil, folowing avisement bifore had in resoun, is or good or badde, as is open bi moral philosophie, and is tau³t in *The folower to the Donet*, and is not suffrid of God to be doon in waast, and therfore is servyce to God, or is azens his servyce, and so or is meritorie and deserving mede, or is deservyng punysching.

65^a And thanne ferther thus. It may not be seid that the chirche therynne offendith and trespasith to God. Forwhi, it is now schewid that the chirche is therynne excusid ; wherfore folowith that the chirche therynne plesith God. And for ech dede, in which the chirche plesith to God, and serveth to God, to the chirche is assigned a reward and mede in hevene, and noon lasse than if thilk feith were trewe. Forwhi, alle causis of deservyng ben in the chirche¹ oon and the same, whether the thing without forth bileeved be trewe, or untrewe, and also, bi open ensauple, it may be schewid al day doon bitwixe ech resonable temperal lord and his servaunt to him servyng, and as doctour callid Holcot proveth it ful wel. Therfore nedis the

¹ MS. chrche.

chirche plesith and serveth to God, and deserveth mede in hevene in this case, thou3 it were so that the chirche errid. Now herupon y argue ferther thus. The chirche is excusid and deserveth mede in hevene, thou3 he erre, stonding these circumstaunces of ignoraunce, and stonding this diligence 65*b* maad forto lacke al ignoraunce to be lackid.¹ And 3e kunnen no better in the mater do, forto have the ri3t kunnyng, than the chirche can do, and doith. Forwhi, 3e kunne not take and have the meenys, and the helpis into geting of kunnyng, which the chirche can take and have, as is sureli knowen at ech wise mannys taking hede therto; neither 3e kunnen prove undoutabili the chirche to be in ignoraunce, anentis the seid maters, as is schewid here bifore. Therfore nedis folowith, if 3e bileeven and holden in tho maters as the chirche bileeveth and holdith, 3e ben excusid; and not oonli excusid, but 3e serve to God, and plesen God, and deserven mede in hevene. Who may avoide or a3enstonde this proof? And thanne ferther, who ever witith that he stondith in a sikir case and wei fro synne, and in wey of servyng and of plesing to God, he synnyth deedli, and is worthi dampnacioun if he bowe therfro, and sette him silf, witingli and 66*a* willingli, into perel of the contrarie; wherfore folowith, if 3e not conforme 3ou thus, as is now

¹ So in MS.

seid, to the chirche but disseveren 3ou silf, and putten 3ou into contrarie, 3e putten 3ousilf fro it of which 3e be sure and sikir, and into a perel of the contrarie. Wherfore it muste nedis be that therynne 3e synnen deedli, and be worthi dampnacioun. Ensaumple into confirmacioun herof may be this. If a man were in a schip in the see, in which he knowith wel he my3te be saaf bi othere mennys rowing, and 3itt, stonding this knowing, he wole go out of the schip, and wole be aboute forto swymme to the lond, whilis the othere men in the schip schulen have as myche to do as thei mowe, forto come to the lond, with the schip, and in the schip, bi craft of rowing or of seiling, whi schulde not this man synne deedli, and be worthi dampnacioun for the wilful putting him silf into perel of his deeth without nede or good
66*b* cause, whilis he witith wel that in the schip he my3te be saaf fro deeth. And sotheli, in like maner it is in this present purpos, as anentis gootli erring fro treuthe of feith, which is a goostli deeth, whanne a man him silf is therof cause. Wherfore of al such madnes, 3he truli to seie wodnes, God delyvere alle cristen peple. Amen. Wondir it were but that y, which am a clerk, schulde se ferther for a mannes defense, in such a case, than a lay man kan se. And 3itt truli, and in conscience to seie, if y wolde holde

azens the chirche as thei doon, and kouthe not prove sufficientli, undoutabili, and cleerli my parti, and that the chirche errith, as y wote wel thei kunnen not so prove her parti, and the erring of the chirche, y couthe not defende me, neither excuse me from deedli synne and fro dampnacioun, bi eny witt or leernyng or wile which y can bithenke or devyse. God therfore helpe out of the seid dicke and myir alle tho that ben therynne.

CHAPTER IX

67^a Now forto procede ferther in this same mater, y aske of thee, which art of the now bfore spokun obstinat and unobedient noumbre, whether thou wolt bileeve and folowe thi silf, in maters which thou hast to do. And in like wise, y aske of thilke same obstinat and unobedient noumbre, whether thei wole bileeve and folowe hem silf, in manye maters which thei han to do. Wel y wote thou wolte seie 3he, and that thou doist so in ful manye maters, and thilke multitude wole also seie 3he, and that thei so doon ful oft, and ful myche in ech day. Thanne, sithen it is so that in tho maters thou maist faile, and in the othere maters it is possible that 3e faile ; and 3itt therynne thou wolt folowe thi silf, and in the othere maters 3e wolen folowe 3ou silf, and forto so folowe 3e holden noon inconvenient, whi schulde 3e thanne be so tikil and so squaymose, and holde for an inconvenient, in mater of clergie, forto folowe the clergie, which in clergie be wiser than 3e ben, thou3 it were so that it is possible clergie therynne

to faile ? Verili, if this be to thee and 3ou a good 67b
cause forto not trowe to the clergie of the chirche,
and to not folowe hem in mater of feith, like good
cause were to thee forto not folowe thi silf, in eny
mater which thou haste to do ; and like good
cause were to 3ou forto not folowe 3ou silf, in eny
mater which 3e have to do. Also, to ech persoon
of the now seid multitude, y speke and talke in
this wise : *Sir, y aske of thee whether God hath
ordeyned and assigned thee forto obeie to the doom of
resoun, and to the chesing of fre wil, or no.* If thou
seie nay ; certis therof folewith that God hath not
ordeynynd thee forto wirche moral vertues, and so
forto be not morali vertuose, and so forto not do
his servyce, neither forto lyve in a lijf which is
above beestis lijf, in dignite and worthynes ; sithen
moral vertuose werkis ben not ellis thanne dedis
doon bi choice of fre will, and bi the doom of 68a
resoun, as it is openli schewid in the first parti of
The folewer to the Donet ; and oonli suche werkis
ben dedis of Goddis lawe and his servycis, as it is
open in the seid *Folewer to the Donet* ; and oonli
such werkis ben tho, bi which a man lyveth above
beestis, manli, and not oonli beestli as beestis doon.
If thou graunte that God hath ordeyned and
assigned thee forto obeie to the doom of resoun,
and to free wil, and forto be reulid and wirche aftir
hem, thanne sithen it is so that God hath not

goven to thee, or to eny othere man, eny other resoun and wil than which mowe, in her demyng and cheesing, erre and faile, it folowith that God ordeynyd and assigned thee forto obeie to thingis which mowe erre and faile, and forto be reulid bi hem, notwithstanding thei ben such that mowe erre and faile, while that thou canst not sufficientli knowe and prove that thei failen. And if this be trewe, it is not inconvenient thee forto graunte that like
 686 wel God hath ordeyned and assigned thee forto obeie in bileevyng to the clergie, and forto fecche thi feith at hem, thouȝ thou knowe that thei mowe, in teching feith, erre and faile, while thou kanst not knowe and prove sufficientli that thei erren and failen. ȝhe more scharpeli forto conclude thus ; sithen it is bifore proved undoutabili, in the vii^e and viii^e chapters of this present first party of this book, that God hath ordeynyd and assignyd thee forto so obeie to the clergie, and thou grauntist that the clergie, in teching and determining feith, may faile and erre, it folowith that thou muste nedis graunte that God hath ordeynyd thee forto obeie and be reulid in thi bileeve leernyng, and taking, and holding, bi hem which mowe therynne faile and erre. Ferthermore y aske of thee thus : *Hath God ordeynyd that thou schuldist truste to thi feet, as in thi walking and goyng in his servyce, and to thin hondis in*

laboring, holding, and clymbyng in his servyce?
Thou maist not herto seie nay; it is so openli
trewe. Thanne thus: God hath so ordeynyd and 69a
assigned thee as now is rehercid, and ȝitt herwith
it is so that neither thou, neither eny othere man,
hath eny othere feet than whiche may slide, and
spurne, and make falle, whilis it were to walke or
stonde without falle in Goddis servyce; or eny
othere hondis than whiche mowen faile in smyting,
in cacching, and in holding in Goddis servyce
whiche is to be doon, as is open ynouȝ. Wherfore
folewith that thou muste nedis graunte that God
hath ordeyned thee forto truste, in his servyce
doyng, to thingis whiche mowe, in tho whilis, faile
and bigile thee. And this is not semyng lasse
inconvenient than that God schulde ordeyne and
assigne thee to men, forto obeie and be reulid bi
hem, in his servyce doing, thouȝ tho men mowe, in
reuling thee into the seid servyce of God, faile,
erre, and be bigiled. But ȝitt y schal go neer to
thee thus. Sithen what y have now concludid and
proved aȝens thee is trewe, and thou maist not
avoide it, y aske of thee hou wolt thou reule the
anentis thi resoun and wil, in the servyce of God, 69b
bi hem and of hem taking, sithen and whilis thou
knowist that thei mowe erre and faile; and hou
thou wolte bere thee, and have thee anentis thi
feete and hondis, in doing and taking bi hem and

of hem the servyce of God, sithen thou knowist that thei mowe faile and disceyve. I am sikir thou wolte be riȝt wel paied, forto be enformed that thou seie and fele thus. Thou wolte do thi diligence and attendaunce that thi resoun not erre in his resonyng and demyng ; and that thi wil not faile in hise choicis and comaundis, and whilis thou so doist, and aftir that thou hast so do, and whilis thou so doist, if in the same while, whanne thou woldist do bi hem or take of hem the servyce of God, resoun errith and wil failith thee, it not knowing neither witing, thou wolte seie, holde, and fele, that God hath thee therynne excusid, and not oonli excusid, but that thou art bounde forto
70^a it do. And also that God hath thi werk acceptid and allowid, into plesaunce and rewarde, as thouȝ the werk were doon in it silf without erring and failing. Forwhi, thou hast do what in thee was, and what in thi power was ; and al that cometh forth amys in this servyce doing, cometh out of thi power, and azens thi power, forto it lette and weerne. And in lijk maner, thou wolte seie and fele that thou wolt do thi bisynes and sufficient attendaunce, that thin hondis and feet not faile, whilis thou art clymbyng or walking in Goddis servyce ; and in caas that, notwithstanding thi diligence and attendaunce, thei faile, thou wolte holde thi failing to be excusid of God : ȝhe, and

not oonli so ; but thou wolte holde thi dede to be rewardid of God, and thou wolte seie and fele that thou were bounde forto so sette thee to werke bi thin hondis, and bi thi feet, if thou not knewist, neither willidist, that thei in the while schulden faile. Now, sir, if thou wolt seie and fele in this mater thus, whi not as wel and in lijk maner thou 70b ouztist fele in the other mater, which is the principal present purpos, that thou ouztist do thi diligence and attendaunce as myche as longith to the, that the clergie faile not, and erre not, in teching and determyng feith. And aftir that thou hast this doon, and whilis thou doist this, if the clergie faile and erre in teching thee, or determynyng to thee feith, whilis thou not knowist, neither willest the clergie so to erre and faile ; thou ouztist holde and fele that thi bileevyng, which thou takist of the clergie, and the werk therof folowing, is not witable to thee, 3he, and that thou art therto bounde forto it do, and that thou art rewardable for it, as thou3 it were without erring and failing 3oven to thee, and doon of thee. Sotheli, it folewith openli ynou3, and therfore thou maist not denye that it so folowith. And thus myche is ynou3 to the purpos for whiche y stonde fro the beginnyng of the vii^e chapter hidirto.

Therefore, if it like to oure Lord God that he submitte and undirputte alle Cristen persoonys 71a

to resoun and fre wil, as that it is trewe it is bfore proved openli ynouȝ in *The Donet*, and in his *Folewer*, and that thouȝ therwith resoun and fre wil ben suche reulis whiche mowe erre and faile, what is this to thee? What hast thou therazen to grucche, that it likith God so forto ordeyne and do? What querel maist thou make therazens to God, or what cause hast thou forto therof compleyne and chalenge make? Sithen, whanne resoun and wil not failen, and thou bi hem doist riȝtli, thou art medid and rewardid, and whanne resoun and wil failen, whilis thou it not causist, neither it knowist, or desirist, thou art not oonli excused, in the dedis comyng therbi, but also thou art for hem medid and rewardid, as thouȝ resoun and wil in tho dedis not faileden. What cause hast thou thanne forto compleyne? Certis, thou hast greet cause forto thanke and oft thanke; wherfore, in lijk maner, if it like to God forto so ordeyne, and submitte,

71^b and undirputte the lay man to the clergie in his hool universal chirche, for to learne and kunne thi feith, and al that perteyneth to thi Cristen religioun, as that this is trewe it is bfore in the vii^e chapter hiderto undoutabili proved, and more is therof tauȝt and seid in *The book of Preesthood*, thouȝ the clergie may faile and erre in his teching, and determynyng; what

moveth thee forto azens this to repugne, and forto to Goddis ordynaunce not obeie, sithen it is here bifore undoutabili proved that bi thin obedience to the clergie, in case of the clergies erring, whilis thou it not knowist, neither desirist, neither makist, noon hurte schal come, but the same good whiche schulde to thee therbi come, if the clergie in the teching not errid? Is not this ynou3 to thee? What maist thou loke aftir eny more, but if thou woldist nedis that God schulde do thee to wite whi he ordeynyd that thou schuldist be reulid bi suche thingis, and persoonys, whiche in the¹ rewling mowe faile? 72a And if thou desirist this to wite, and but if thou it wite, thou wolte not obeie and performe the ordynaunce whiche thou maist openli, fro the beginnyng of the vii^e chapiter hidirto, knowe God to have maad, verrili thou art so proud that art worthi be felowschipid with Lucifer in helle. Arere, therfore, and turne into thi dewe obedience, and bithenke that forto knowe more of Goddis privetees, being above the fynding and my3te of oure natural resoun, than he wole vouche saaf forto reveele and denounce to us, is a foul stinking presumcioun, namelich if we wolen not ellis fulfille what we knowen, or mowe knowe if we wolen, God have ordeyned us to

¹ MS. the^e.

do. Whanne al is of thee in this mater musid,
 peraventure God thus ordeynyd this, that thou
 schuldist be reulid bi thingis and persoonys
 whiche myȝten faile, bi cause thou schuldist, bi
 72^b so moche, se, and feele, and knowe, and knowe-
 leche his gentilnes, his goodnes, that he wole
 bothe excuse thee, and reward thee in thi worch-
 ingis and servycis, whanne thou failist bi the
 faile of thi rewlars; and that thou schuldist, bi
 so moche, have cause and a motive forto the
 hertilier and the ofter thanke him, and the ofter
 and the bettir, bi good servycis, quite him aȝen.
 Lo, sir, if this be cause whi God maad his
 seid ordynaunce, certis it is ful fair and honest
 cause, and profitable cause to thee; ȝhe, such
 a cause that therbi thou ouȝtist take stiring and
 motive, forto chese rather to obeie prelatis of
 the clergie, in thi feith, and alle othere pointis
 of Cristen religioun leernynge and keping, than
 hem therynne not obeie. I seie therfore to
 alle such persoonys, what is writen in the
 iiii^e Psalme thus: *O ȝe sones of men, hou longe ben*
ȝe of hevvy herte; whi loven ȝe vanite and seken
ȝe lesing. Be ȝe sones aȝen turnyng, as God
 spekith, Jeremye 3^e c^r.; that ȝe be sones of
 obedience, as Petir wole, i. Petri i^e c^r.; leste
 73^a that the clergie have nede forto compleyne upon
 ȝou to God, seiying as it is write, the xvii Psalme

thus : *Alien sones lieden to me; alien sones wexiden oold,*¹ *and crokiden fro thi pathis.* For, sotheli, hou othere manye wolen not be sones of obedience, thei ben in that, sones of Belial. Forwhi, sones of Belial is as moche to seie as sones without 3ocke, as it is seid, Iudicum the xix^e c^r. *Wirche 3e werkis of lizt whilis 3e han lizt*; thus is² schewid to 3ou that 3e be the sones of lizt, lest peraventure, if 3e dispise this lizt so freeli profrid to 3ou, this lizt be take fro 3ou, and be 3oven to othere which schulen wirche with it, and bring forth fruit, and 3e be putte into uttrist derkenessis, whilis the nyzt schal be maad come to 3ou, in which no man may wirche. And with al this y biseche 3ou, attende 3e to what is seid bfore fro the biginnyng of the vii^e chapiter hidirto, and name-lich to this, that Crist seide to hise apostlis, and in hem to alle her successouris, Luc. 10 c^r., *He 73^b that heerith 3ou, heerith me, and he that dispisith 3ou, dispisith me.*

¹ Vulgate, inveterati.

² Not in MS. but it seems necessary.

CHAPTER X

3IT lete us go ferther in this same mater, in hope forto spede therbi the bettir. I putte case, thou have in a mater, which thou hast to do, an erroneose conscience, of which thou art not, bi thin owne wil, neither bi thin neccligence, the cause. Alle men woten that in this case, standing thi conscience so erroneose, thou art bounde forto folowe it, and truste to it, and obeie to it. Forwhi, as bi the sentence of the apostle, ad Rom. xiv c^r.¹ who ever doith azens his conscience bildith to helle, and therfore he therynne deedli synneth. And thou₃ it be thi part forto leie down, or do away thilk erroneose conscience, as soone as thou maist have therto witing, power, and grace, 3itt al the while thilk conscience dureth, thou muste and ou₃tist confoorme thee to it. This is proved of greet clerkis bi good divinite undoutabili. Wel, sir, 74^a if this be trewe, as it is una₃enseiabili trewe, and

¹ The more formal Latin title comes from the small correcting hand on the margin, which may possibly be Pecock's own.

thou maist not, for schame of thi silf, putte thi conscience bifore the consciencis of al the hool clergie, or ellis of the more party, and of the kunnynger parti therof, namelich sithen to thilk clergie were as looth to erre in conscience as is looth to thee, and also forto defende hem fro errour, namelich in mater of Cristen feith, thei kunnen better than thou kanst forto defende thee; folowith nedis, thou were wood to seie nay that bi like skile, 3he and bi greter cause and skile, stonding the clergie, or the more and kunnynger party, in conscience of a mater consernyng thee, as in Cristen religioun, thou art bounde forto obeie and folowe thilke conscience of the clergie; 3he, thou3 it were so that thilk conscience of the clergie were for the while erroneose. And if thou have conscience into the contrarie, thou art bounde forto leye doun thilk thi conscience, as erroneose, and so forto not folewe it, but forto holde it a con- 74^bscience erroneose, not worthi to be folowid, in lasse than thou have forto make iustili the excepcioun azens the clergie, which excepcioun is seid bifore in the vii c^r.

Also thus y putte case :—in a large, wyde parisch, up lond, be an oold symple widowe, or an oold symple husbonde man, to whom a greet famed kunnyng mayster of divinite is curat, and parsoun,

and viker. This husbond man is enfoormed, and tauzt of the seid his famose curat forto bileeve as feith a certeyn article, which in trouthe is an heresie. This man hath no motive, neither can fynde cause, whi he schulde not trowe to his seid curat, and whi he schulde walke wyde forto examine whether his curat techith him ríztli, or no. And therfore this man cleveth to the seid doctrine of his curat, as stiffeli as he doith to eny other article, which he hath leernyd of the same curat to be feith. In this case, it is holde of ful good
75^a clerkis, bi greet skilis, that this man is excusid in his now seid errour, and not oonli he is excusid, but he plesith God, and deserveth mede and blisse bi this errour, lijk as he is excusid and serveth and plesith God, and deserveth mede and blisse, for bileeve of othere articlis, which he bileeveth bi doctrine takun of his curat, for oon skile is, as in his side, of oon and of ech of these articlis whiche he is tauzt of the seid curat; and therfore, as bi oon of hem he plesith God and deserveth blisse, so bi ech othere of hem; 3he, and not oonli is this trewe, but also, standing this case, this man were a martir, if he died for knowleching, and avowing, and defending of thilke same seid article, which in trouthe is erroneose, and he is bounde forto so bileve thilk article, standing this seid case and hise seid circumstauncis. And if this be trewe,

thanne, sithen the hool clergie of the chirche, or the more and kunnynger parti therof, is as fer above thee, and ech of 3ou, and is as myche to be bileeved, in mater of feith, of 3ou as this oon 75^b curat is above the seid oon of his parisch, and is to be bileeved of the same seid oon man of his parisch, folewith nedis for lijk skile and like cause, that in lijk maner it is to be trewe bitwixe ech of 3ou, 3he and betwixe alle 3ou, and the al hool clergie of the chirche, or of the more and kunnynger partie of the same clergie, in mater of feith and in hard maters of Cristen conversacioun in Cristen religioun. A ful greet favour and ese and suerte ech of 3ou is aboute forto putte away from him silf, and forto sette him silf in perel, 3he and into synne, whilis ech of 3ou wole nedis truste to him silf in such seide mater, and wole not truste to the clergie, which God hath provydid to be above the laife in his chirche, and to reule the layfe of his chirche, namelich in mater of feith, as ech of 3ou may se, openli tau3t and schewid in *The book of Preesthode*, maad to 3ou in 3oure owne lay tunge. And if there were noon other cause than avoidaunce of this greet folie, and taking of this greet ese and suerte, sotheli this were cause greet ynou3, thee forto in the seid maters obeie to the clergie of the chirche in maner bifore seid, if thou be eny thing wise. Take ensaumple, y preie thee,

how lewid he were which, being no maryner, wole
 not truste to the mariners, forto be caried in the
 schip with hem, bi her rowing or seiling, but wole
 stirte out of the schippe, and wole take upon him
 forto swymme and rowe him silf to the porte, with
 hise owne armes and leggis. Bithenke also hou
 manye men, as 3e han herd, han be cause of her owne
 spilling, and of othere mennys spilling with hem,
 bi cause thei wolden nedis the schippe schulde be
 governed aftir hem, and not aftir the mariners,
 which bi al resoun schulden be kunnynger in thilk
 mater than thei schulde have trowid hem silf have
 be. And for the love and reverence and sake of
 Almi3ti God, lete this chastise 3ou fro the seid
 76^b presumpcioun, and fro the seid inobedience.

If thou seie to me thus: *I have leernyd that Holi
 Writte is so worthi a ground and foundement for oure
 feith, that noon othere ground, or foundement passith it,
 or is surer to be cleven to than is it; wherfore, sir, it
 wolde seme that if y cleve to Holi Scripture to take of it
 my feith, y am not to be blamed, but y am therynne
 thanke worthi, for as myche as y confoorme me to thilke
 reule which God hath purveied, forto be oure reule in
 mater of feith, and whom noon other reule in erthe
 passith: sir, that this is trewe y graunte weel,
 namelich as anentis al the feith which Holi Writt
 techith, for that this be trewe schal be schewid wel
 in The book of feith in latyn, or ellis in The book*

of the chirche in latyn, as God wole graunte. Nevertheles, thanne y aske of the a3enward thus. If thou wolte thus folowe Holi Scripture, whether wolte thou folowe it in his ri3t and dewe litteral undirstonding, or ellis in his unri3t, and undewe 77^a litteral undirstonding? Thou wolte not seie but that in his ri3t and dewe litteral undirstonding. And if thou be so sette, certis thanne thou schuldist rather seche forto have this ri3t and dewe undirstonding of hem, whiche, as bi al liklihode, kunnen suerli enforme thee of thilke ri3t and dewe undirstonding, than of thi silf, or of him, or of hem, that is to seie of thee, or of the seid othere multitude of lay peple, which, bi al liklihode of resoun, not so wel kunnen teche which is thilk ri3t and dewe undirstonding.

And thanne ferther thus; sithen it is so that the hool chirche of the clergie, or the more or the kunnynger partie therof, as bi al liklihode of resoun, schulden kunne myche more skile, forto opene and teche to thee thilk ri3t or dewe undirstonding of Holi Scripture than thou kanst, or than the seid multitude of lay peple can, and that for manye skilis, whiche now here anoon aftir schal be seid, folewith nedis that forto have the ri3t and dewe 77^b undirstonding of Holi Scripture, so that thou my3tist folowe the same Holi Scripture as a cheef delyverer to thee of feith, thou schuldist leerne of

the seid clergie, whiche were thilk riȝt and dewe undirstonding, rather than of thi silf, or of the seid lay multitude. That the seid clergie, or the more or wiser seid parti therof, can better schewe and opene which is the riȝt and dewe undirstonding of Holi Scripture than thou, or the seid lay multitude kan, lo y schal declare bi ensaumplis thus. If thou have chartris, or endenturis, bi which thou cleymest forto have lond, which is holde from thee, to whom schalt thou more trust forto have the riȝt and dew undirstonding of thilk chartris? Schalt thou sette thi witte therto, or the wit of lay men unlearned in the kingis lawe, bifore the witte of iustices, or of seriauntis, or of famose kunnyng apprentices in the kingis lawe? Thou maist not seie that thou so schuldist. Thou maist al day se
78a that over myche losse schulden men have, if thei so schulden truste to her wittis anentis suche writingis. In lijk maner, if thou have to do with a statute of the king in Ynglond, of whom schalt thou learne the riȝt and dewe undirstonding of it? Schalt not thou learne it of hem, whiche ben scolid bi manye ȝeeris of labour in the kingis lawe of Ynglond? Certis, if thou knewist hou myche labour is maad in ynnes of court in Londoun, bi tymes of vacacioun, aboute the reding and declaring of the kingis statutis, thou woldist seie that fer were her siȝtis, and her kunnyngis therynne, above

thin and above alle othere mennys kunnyngis, not so excercisid bi greet labour therynne as her wittis ben. If thou haddist a schip to be maad, and woldist not trust to the wittis of the carpenters, more than to thin, or more than to the wittis of men not lerned in such carpentrie, thou schuldist have such unberable hurt, as thou maist bithenke thee othere men have take, bi her such pre- 78b
sumpcioun. If thou haddist a dout hou a text, or a processe, writen withynne the bookis of philosophie, schulde be riztli undirstonde, of whom schuldist thou rather learne this rizt undirstonding, than of hem which han be longe scolid therynne, which, certis, kunnen turne thee hidir and thider, forto now trowe this, now trowe the reverse, like as a man kan with a strawe turne a katte, now hidir, now thidir. And if al this be trewe, as thou muste nedis knowleche to be trewe, seie to me at whom schuldist thou fecche thee rizte and dewe undirstonding of the hiȝe and hard writing of oure bileeve in the Bible, than at hem which bi long bifore goyng scole in logik, and in philosophie, and aftirward bi lijk long labour in divinite, han excercisid hem therabout, rather than at thi silf, or than at othere lay persoonys of the seid multitude, which han slepid fro such studie, and laboure, and fro alle the sleiztis forto helpe hem therynne.

And if thou wolte pretende thi natural resoun 79a

forto be so cleer in his nature, into the fynding of
 the riȝt and dew undirstonding of Holi Scripture,
 that thi natural witt schal do as myche as alle the
 natural resouns of al the clergie of the chirche,
 into the fynding of the riȝt and dewe undirstond-
 ing of Holi Scripture, which thing is ful unlikli,
 that noon in al the multitude of clergie is now, or
 hath be so cleer in such witt as thou art, or as ȝe
 fewe in reward of so moche gretter multitude ben,
 ȝitt y seie thus. If thou, or if ȝe han such witt,
 into the fynding of the riȝt and dewe undirstond-
 ing of Holi Scripture, thanne nedis it muste be
 that in ȝoure power it is forto nedis make the
 wittis of clerkis to se the seid cleernes of ȝoure
 witt, and forto make her wittis accorde to ȝoure
 wittis, in the seid mater ; and moche rather this
 folowith, if ȝe seie that ȝoure natural wittis ben
 79b better, anentis the seid mater, than the natural
 wittis of alle clerkis. Abide ȝe, thanne, into thilk
 tyme that ȝe have opened ȝoure seid excellent
 wittis to the seid greet multitude of clerkis, and so
 abide ȝe into tyme ȝe have wonne tho clerkis into
 ȝoure side, as ȝe musten nedis so wyne him, if
 ȝoure wittis be suche, and if tho clerkis wolen ȝeve
 to ȝou audience, as y am ful sikir thei wolen be
 glad forto here ȝou, if thei perceyve such witt in
 ȝou, and that ȝe kunnen uttre it to hem, and redeli
 thanne schal be first tyme to ȝou forto folowe

3oure owne witte in mater of feith, and forto preferre 3oure witt bifore the wittis of the clergie. And if 3e preferre 3oure wittis above the clergies witt, in mater of feith bifore this doon, myn bifore argumentis, maad fro the biginyng of the vii^e chapiter hidirto, convicten 3ou, not oonli of greet foli, but of greet perel; 3he, and of greet synne of pride, of presumpcioun, of unobedience, to hem whom Crist hath putte to be overe 3ou, to 80a reule 3ou, as y schewe in *The book of preesthode*, 3he, and of dampnacioun into helle. He that wole se more of this mater, loke he afir *The book of the chirche*, to be maad in latyn.

Now fynali forto ech man of the seid unobedient peple y seie thus. If thou have in feith, or in opinioun, that the chirche may not erre in mater of feith, thou muste nedis fele that thou ouztist obeie to the chirche in mater of feith. A3enward, if thou have, in feith or in opinioun, that the chirche may erre in mater of feith, 3itt unto tyme thou can sufficientli and a3enunseiabili prove that the chirche failith, in the mater of feith in which thou variest fro the chirche, thou ouztist obeie to the feith of the chirche, for skilis maad fro the biginnyng of the vii^e chapiter; and more than this the chirche wole not aske of thee, as for thin obedience to feith. But thanne be ware wel herof. If it seme to thee that thou hast sufficient

proof aʒens the chirche, truste thou not to thin
806 owne seemyng oonli, neither to thin owne, and to
the semyng of hem whiche ben like wise affectid
with thee, and holden at first with thee ; but uttre
thi mocious to thin adversaries, and lete thin
evydencis or mocious be disputed, and pledid
bitwixe men of thi counseil, and men of the
adversarie counseil at ful, eer thou trust thee to
have sufficient proof aʒens thi adversaries ; and
ellis holde thee not sikir for thi parti. Remembre
thee wel, and se whi it is that so greet plee is in
the world aboute lond, and othere goodis, and
for trespacis pretendid to be doon. Is not this
for that the party suer studieth and considerith the
evydencis of his side with his counseil, and the
evydencis of the contrarie side ben not considerid
of him, neither he heerith hou the contrarie partie
can answeere to hise evydencis, and therfore,
whanne the mater is brouʒte into plee and
disputing in the court, he is overthrowe, and
is declarid to be in the wors side, notwithstond-
ing he trowid bifore that al the world schulde
812 not have go bizonde his evydencis ? Verrili thus
it fallith in unnoumbrable sithis in Ynglond. And
redili cause whi is ther noon, but that in lijk
maner it may, and is likeli to be with ech of ʒou.
Wherfore, into tyme ʒoure motives be examined,
togidere with the motives of the chirche, in

arguyng and pleding at greet leiser, holde 3e never 3ou to have better evydence for 3oure side, than the chirche hath for his side; and holde 3e not 3oure silf to be out of state of dampnacioun. If 3e wisten hou myche ri3t substancial and witti cleerkis han be oft bigilid, for defaute of this prudence nowe mynystrid to 3ou, 3e wolden be ware of the foli, of which 3e ben now warned, as 3e wolden be ware of deeth. And thus y eend here the first party of this present book.

PART II¹

CHAPTER I

81^b FADIR, 3e han seide in the x^e. c^r. of the first parti of this present book, to alle tho lay men whiche ben obstinat to the feith of the chirche, that Holi Writt is the cheef and principal ground of al the feith, which is conteyned in Holi Writt. And treuli, fadir, y can not undirstonde as 3itt but that nedis 3e must have so seid to hem, if it my3t be holde for trewe in eny wise, nameliche sithen 3e han seid to hem, as 3e musten nedis seie to hem, and it my3te not be left unseid, that the dewe and ri3t litteral undirstonding of Holi Writt for trewe feith to be had, lay men musten fecche at the chirche; that is to seie, at the al hool clergie of dyvynyte, 82^a or of the more and wittier party therof; nevertheless, with the excepcioun bifore sett in the first partie of this boke, in the bigynnyng of the vii c^r. And redili y knowe so moche of her wittis, and of

¹The dialogue form, which, in the first part, Pecock's zeal for the conversion of his opponents turned into a hortatory monologue, is here resumed.

her counseilis, that ellis if 3e hadde not so seid to hem, 3e schulden laboure in veyn as forto bringe hem into the obedience, into which 3e ben aboute bi writing of this present book. Also resoun therto moveth thus. The chirche, or the clergie, in delyveryng to peple feith which is in Holy Writt, alleggith for thilke delyveraunce Holi Writt, and expowneth Holi Writt into thilk feith so delyvered. Wherefore, the chirche in that biknowith that he hath thilk feith of Holi Writte, and so not of him silf principali ; forwhi not of him silf originali or groundeli, but of the seid Holi Writt eer and bifore, and therefore of Holi Writt originali and groundeli. And so as anentis al feith conteynyed in Holi Scripture, the same Scripture schulde be 82b principal bifore the chirche. Confirmacioun to the same may be this. If the chirche hadde of him silf principali, groundli, and fundamentali, al the feith which is conteynyed in Holi Writt, the chirche wolde not, and ouzte not forto leene to Holi Writt, as for grounding and fundamental teching of thilk feith, neither wolde sende eny askers into Holi Writt, or wolde labore forto expowne Holi Writt to hem into thilk feith. But the chirche wolde and ouzte seie to suche askers of riȝt feith : *Bileve 3e to me for that y seie this to be riȝt bileeve.* And the chirche wolde not fecche to suche askers autorite of a thing louȝer, and of

lasse auctorite to the purpos, than the chirche is. Wherfore the chirche, as it seemeth, bi his owne pretencioun or interesse to expowne Holi Writt into teching which is trewe feith, must nedis knowleche that he takith Holi Scripture for his better, worthier, hizer, and groundier fundament of the
 834 feith, which feith the chirche techith bi Holi Writt, and bi the exposicioun of the same Holi Writt. And therfore opene it is that 3e have not seid amys, in this 3oure now spokun seiying to lay men.

Into the othere contrarie side, fadir, manye skilis mowe be maad, that the chirche is principalier and cheefer than is Holi Writt, anentis eny feith tau3t bi Holi Writt, and that for viii argumentis, which y can make therto. Wherfore, y doute not but that trouble and discencioun schulen be bittwixe¹ lay men and clerkis, 3he and bitwixe summe clerkis and othere clerkis, upon this, whether Holi Writt or the chirche is chefir, and of more power havying anentis feithis conteynyd in Holi Writt; in lasse thanne 3e, fadir, answer to thilke viii argumentis, and so y can not se, but that the mater of this discencioun muste nedis be brou3t forth into utteraunce and comunicacioun.²

¹ So in MS.

² Wharton reads 'conicacioun,' but the natural reading seems to me that of the text, the scribe having written 'cōicaciōn' in carelessness.

Sone, y am redi to heere thi viii argumentis, and forto answere to hem if y can ; peraventure, in the answering to hem schal growe in sum thing, 83*b* wherbi schal be clerid what comparisoun is to be hadde bitwixe Holi Writt and the chirche, anentis al feith conteynynd in Holi Writt. And bi so moche y am the leefir forto heere thin argumentis, and forto answere to hem, bi hou moche thou hast now seid, and trouthe is that the treuthe, which is occasioun of the now seid comparisoun making bitwixe Holi Writte and the chirche, myȝte not be left unseid, and untoold to the lay peple, neither to clerkis. And that for cause now bifore bi thee alleggid.

Fadir, aȝens this, which ȝe han allowid bifore in the x^e chapter to be trewe, that Holi Writt is such a ground and foundement of oure Cristen general feith, that noon gretter, or bettir, or surer to us, ground or foundament is for our Cristen general feith writen in Holi Writt, y may argue bi viii principal argumentis, of which this is the first. No thing is to be seid ground to us of oure feith, without which thing oure feith myȝte have be 84*a* sufficientli groundid and witnessid. But without Holi Scripture oure now had feith myȝte have be to us sufficientli groundid, wherfore Holi Scripture is not to be seid grounde of oure feith. The first premysse is to be proved

herbi. No thing is ground of another thing, without which the othere thing may be. And the ii premysse is to be proved thus. Thouȝ the apostlis hadde not write eny word, ȝitt thei myȝten have tauȝt to othere clerkis and lay folke the al ful hool feith, sufficientli to the bihove of the peple, as to her therof the leernyng, reporting, and remembring, whiche cleerkis and lay folk, so tauȝt of the apostlis, and overlyvyng to the apostlis, myȝten have tauȝt othere clerkis and lay folk the same al hool feith sufficientli; which, surviving and overlyvyng her techers, myȝten have tauȝt othere folk, bothe of the clergie and of the layfe, the same hool feith sufficientli; whiche folke so tauȝt, also surviving, and overlyvyng her
84^b techers, myȝten have tauȝt the same al hool feith sufficientli to othere, and so forth into this present dai, without eny writing maad and delyvered to folk upon the same feith so tauȝt. And if this had be doon, thanne the feith of ech leerners¹ hadde be sufficiently ynouȝ groundid in her techers, and in no scripture therupon maad. Wherefore it folowith that scripture is not, ne was not the ground of feith to eny persoonys bileevyng.

That this is trewe, which is bfore takun in the proof of the ii^e premysse, that thouȝ the apostlis hadde not writen eny word, thei myȝten

¹ So in MS.

have tauzt the al hool ful feith to peple sufficientli, y may argue thus. In tyme of the oold lawe, it was so that al the bileve conteynynd in thilk lawe was tauzt bi mouth, and was leerned bi mouth. Forwhi, Exodi. the xiii^e chap., whanne it is seid of the paske day, that it schulde be kept 3eerli, bi the lawe thanne rennyng, it is seid ferther anoon aftir, thus: *And thou schalt telle to thi sone in that day, and schalt* 85a *seie:—this is it what the Lord did to me, whanne y zede out of Egipt, and it schal be as a signe in thin honde, and as a memorial bifore thin izen, and that the lawe of God be ever in thi mouth, for in a stronge hond the Lord ledde thee out of Egipt, et cetera.* Also soone aftir there, whanne it is bede that the peple of Iewis schulde halowe to God ech first gendrid thing, that openeth the wombe among the sones of Israel, as wel of men as of beestis, thanne it is seid anoon aftir thus: *And whanne thi sone schal aske of thee to morewe and seie, What is this? thou schalt answeere to him, In a strong honde the Lord ledde us out of Egipt of the house of servage. For whanne Pharaο was maad hard, and wolde not delyvere us, the Lord killid al the first gendrid thing in the lond of Egipt, fro the first gendrid of man til to the first gendrid of beestis. Therefore y offre to the Lord al thing of mawle kinde that openeth the wombe, and y azenbie alle*

85^b *the first gendrid thingis of my sones. Therfore it schal be as a signe in thin hond, and as a thing hanged for mynde bifore thin izen. For in a stronge hond he ledde us out of Egipt. Also lijk sentence to this is writen, Deutron. vi^e c^r., of the paske daie keping, and Josue 4^e c^r., of the xii stoonnes taken out of the water of Iordan, and sette on drie land, into perpetual remembraunce that Iordan was dried ; also, Deutron. 4^e c^r., it was seid thus : Forzete thou not the wordis which thin izen sizen, and falle tho¹ not down fro thin herte in alle the daies of thi lijf. Thou schalt teche tho to thi sones and thi sones sones. Telle thou the day in which thou stodist bifore thi Lord God in Oreb, whanne the Lord spake to me, and seid, et cetera. Also, Deutron. xi^e chap., it was seid thus : Putte ze these wordis in zoure hertis and soulis, and hange ze tho wordis for a signe² in hondis, and sette ze bitwixe zoure izen ; teche zoure sones that thei thenke in tho wordis, whanne thou sittist*
 86^a *in thin house, and goist in the wey, and liggist down and risist. Thou schalt write tho wordis on the postis and zatis of thin house, that the daies of thee and of thi sones be multiplied in the lond which, et cetera. Wherefore, bi like skile, in tyme of the newe lawe, the al hool feith myzte have be tauzt bi word of mouthe fro oon to an other, into this present day sufficientli. Ferthermore, into*

¹ So in MS.

² MS. assigne.

proof or into confirmacioun of the same seid ii^e premysse availith this, that we seen in summe monesteries the kunnyng, and the fulfilling of certeyn usagis and customes be lad forth in persoones of the monestarie, and be continued, bothe in knowing and in fulfilling sufficientli, fro the first fadris of the monestaries unto this present day, and that without eny writyng maad upon the same usagis, but bi discente of word oonli fro persooone into persooone. Wherefore, in lijk maner, the kunnyng and the using of al oure hool feith myȝte have be hadde, and lad, and contynued sufficientli bi mynde and 86b bi teching of mouth, fro fadris and prelatis into her children and parischens, without eny writyng to be maad therupon.

The secunde argument is this. If it had be doon in dede, as is next above argued that it myȝt so have be doon, that is to seie, if it had be so doon that the apostlis hadden tauȝt bi word manye clerkis, and manye of the lay folk, the hool al ful feith sufficientli, and these clerkis and laifolk, surviving and overlyvyng to the apostlis, hadden tauȝt bi word the same hool al feith to othere clerkis and lai folk, succeeding aftir the deeth of the apostlis, and that sufficientli, and so forth into this day, thanne the feith so tauȝt bi word, and so descending

bi word fro persoonys into persoonys into this present day sufficientli, had be sufficientli groundid in the clergie, whilis the clergie so tauzten to othere; thouȝ therwith a scripture hadde be maad and delyvered forth bi the apoostlis upon the same feith, so bi word tauzt to othere. But so it was in dede, that the apostlis tauzten
87*a* othere clerkis the ful al hool feith bi word sufficientli, and tho clerkis, so tauzt of the apostlis, sufficientli tauzten othere clerkis, succeding aftir hem, the same al hool feith, and that bi word sufficientli, and so forth contynuali into this present day. Wherefore, the al hool ful feith, bothe in the tyme of the apostlis, and alwey ever sithen, was groundid sufficientli in the clergie, for the tyme beyng and lyvyng, and bi the maner now seid teching and delyveryng. And thanne ferther it folowith thus. If the clergie for the tyme being, bi her such now seid teching and delyveryng, was and is sufficient ground for our feith for al tyme, sithen the daies of the apostlis, it folowith at the leest that forto loke aftir, or sette eny other thing, as is Scripture, or eny other thing, to be ground of the same feith aftir Cristis teching bi word, and sithen the teching of the apostlis bi word, is no nede. The first premysse of this secunde principal argument is open ynouȝ to be trewe; and the ii^e

premysse of the same argument schal be proved ^{87b} thus. Crist bade to hise apostlis, Mathew, the last chapter, thus : *Go 3e therfore and teche 3e alle folkis, baptising hem in the name of the Fadir, and of the Sone, and of the Holi Goost, teching hem to kepe alle thingis, what ever thingis y have comaundid to 3ou*; and also, Mark the last c^r., Crist bede to hise apostlis thus : *Go 3e into al the world and preche 3e the gospel to every creature*. And anoon aftir, it is seid there thus : *Thei, forsothe, goyng forth prechiden every where*. But so it is that the apostlis hadden not fulfillid this now seid comaundement, maad to hem bi Crist, in lasse than thei hadden prechid, bi word of mouthe sufficientli, al the hool feith necessarie to be had of the peple ; forwhi, al the hool feith necessarie to be had, is includid in the gospel of God, that is to seie, in the message of God, which message God sent into the world. Wherefore, sothe it is that the apostlis prechiden bi word of mouthe, to othere clerkis and folkis, al the hool ^{88a} ful feith sufficientli; and so the secunde before maad principal premysse to be proved is trewe.

The iii^e principal argument is this. If the apostlis hadden tau3t manye clerkis, and manye of the laifolk, the hool al ful feith bi word of mouthe principali, and these clerkis and layfolk, survyvyng and over-lyvyng to the apostlis, hadden tau3t, bi

word principali, the same hool feith to othere clerkis, and to othere folk after the deeth of the apostlis, and so forth into this day, thanne the al hool feith so tauzt bi word of mouth principali, and so descending bi word principali, fro persoonys into persoonys, unto this present day, hadde be principali groundid in the clergie, whilis the clergie so tauzt othere, thouȝ therwith had be a scripture maad, and delyvered forth bi the apostlis to othere, upon the same feith. But so it was in dede, that the apostlis tauzten othere clerkis the hool ful feith, bi word principali, and tho clerkis so tauzt of
886 the apostlis bi word principali, tauzten othere clerkis succeding to hem the same al hool feith, and that bi word principali, and so forth contynueli into this present day. Wherefore, the al hool feith, bothe in the tyme of the apostlis, and alwey sithen, was groundid principali in the clergie for the tyme beyng and lyvyng, and bi maner now seid teching and delyveryng. And thanne ferther it folowith thus: if the clergie for the tyme beyng, bi her now seid such teching and delyvering, was and is the principal ground for oure feith, for al tyme aftir the daies of the apostlis, it folowith at the fulle that forto loke aftir, or seche aftir, or seie Scripture to be the principal ground of our feith, or that Scripture schulde be a principal ground therof, and more necessarie and better grounding

of the same feith than is the clergie or the chirche, aftir the daies of the apostlis, is waast, ydil, vanite and untrewē. The first premysse of this iii principal argument is pley n ynou3 to be trewe. ^{89a} And for proof of the ii^e premisse of this iii^e principal argument, may be maad the same argument which bifore is maad for proof of the ii^e premysse, in the ii^e principal argument, and that bi the there rehercid textis, of Mathew the last chapter, and of Mark the last chapter.

The iii^e principal argument is this. The chirche of Crist, which he foundid in erthe, and of which he is the heed, is alwey and al tymes oon and the same, as Seynt Poul witnessith, ad Eph. v^e c.,¹ where he seith that oon² man to have bi the lawe oon wyf undepartabili, signifieth Crist to have oon chirche for his spouse. And the same witnessith the clergie, bi the profis or sequencis, whiche he singith in the masse of dedicacioun feest day, and in the viii^e day of the same feest. And this same is comounli allegorised upon thilk text, Cant. vi^e c.: *Oon is my culum*. But so it was, that in the tyme of the apostlis, the chirche of Crist in erthe, bi his principal party, which was the clergie, was of so greet worthines, ^{89b} and auctorite, and dignite, that he thanne more

¹ The reference is from the margin.

² MS. oo.

groundid the feith of Crist, than scripture groundid feith of Crist thanne. Forwhi the apostlis, thanne being the clergie of Cristis chirche, groundiden more Cristis feith than her writyng, maad and writen bi hem, groundid as thanne the same feith ; in as moche as the effect of a cause doith not so moche into another effect, as doith the cause of the same effect into the same other effecte, aftir good philosophie. Wherefore it seemeth folowe that the chirche of Crist, now being, and at al tyme a this side the apostlis for the tyme being, is and was of lijk greet worthines, auctorite, and dignite, that he now more groundith the feith of Crist than Scripture groundith now the same feith. Sithen oon and the same chirche is now and thanne, and therfore, bi like skile, the same clergie of the chirche is now, which was thanne.

90a The v^e principal argument is this. The clergie of the chirche dispensith with the thing which Holi Scripture forbedith. Forwhi, the pope 3eveth leeve to a bigam, that is to seie, to a man that hath be twies weddid, forto be a dekene and a preest, notwithstanding that Holi Scripture forbedith it, i^e Thi^e., 3^e c^r. But so it is that the lasse worthi refreyneth not the worthier, neither lowseth the bindingis of the worthier ; wherefore the clergie of holi chirche is worthier, myztier, and of gretter auctorite, than is Holi Scripture, or at the leest the

clergie is of evene worthines, even power, and my₃te, and of auctorite with Holi Scripture of the Newe Testament.

The vi^e principal argument is this. The chirche of Crist, bi his cheef party the clergie, now and al tymes, hath power to expowne, declare, and interprete Holi Scripture, hou Holi Scripture oweth to be undirstonde, in the sense and undirstonding of God. But so it is that even peer hath not power into his even¹ peer, aftir the comoun wel 90b allowid proverbe, neither the lasse worthi hath power over his worthier, as may be takun of Poul, Hebr. vii^o capitulo,² where he seith that the lasse worthi is blessid of the more worthi. Wherefore it seemeth that the clergie, and the chirche bi his parti which is the clergie, is more worthi than is Holi Scripture.

The vii^e principal argument is this. What ever thing nedith to have upon him silf an interpreter, or a declarer, nedith to have the same thing as his overer and worthier, but so it is that Holi Scripture nedith to have of him silf an interpreter and a declarer, which is the clergie in erthe, as forto schewe which is the dewe undirstonding of Holi Scripture; wherefore Holi Scripture nedith to have the clergie, as to be to Holi Scripture an overer, and to him as a worthier.

¹ MS. eeve.

² MS. a later addition.

The viii^e argument is this. What ever thing the apostlis settiden in the comune crede, is to be bileeved and to be holden and usid of alle Cristen, 91a but the apostlis settiden in the comune crede this article, that it is forto bileeve to the general holi chirche in erthe; wherfore nedis it is to bileeve to the universal, or general holi chirche in erthe. And we mowe in noon other wise bileeve to holi chirche in erthe, than we bileeven to the clergie of the general chirche in erthe, for as myche as the clergie is the principale parti of holi chirche in erthe. Wherfore it folowith that nedis we muste bileve to the clergie of the general chirche in erthe. And if the clergie ou3ten in eny dede be bileeved, he ou3te be bileeved in his dede, whanne he determyneth eny article to be taken as feith; for as myche as this dede is oon of the grettist aviseable dedis which the clergie dooth. Wherfore alle Cristen owen forto bileeve to the determynacioun of the clergie, thou3 he determyne azens Holi Scripture.

Lo, fadir, these viii argumentis y have gaderid togidere forto be assoilid bi 3oure hi3e wisdom.

CHAPTER II

SONE, thi seid viii argumentis ben riȝt welcome to me, for me thenkith the answer and the assoiling of ^{92b} hem with Goddis grace schal do good. The ii^e premysse of the same first principal argument, whanne it is seid thus : without Holi Scripture, oure now had feith myȝte have be to us sufficientli groundid, is fals, forto speke of kindeli myȝte in oure side, and in oure soulis, without greet singuler myracle of God, above kind, to have be doon in oure resouns, and mynde, and so it is moost convenient in this purpos to speke. And whanne, for proof of this ii^e premysse, it is argued thus : thouȝ the apostlis hadden not write eny word, ȝitt thei myȝten have tauȝt to othere clerkis and layfolk the al hool ful feith sufficientli, sotheli this is fals. Forwhi, a feith is not tauȝt to a peple sufficientli, but if it be tauȝt so that bi thilk teching thei mowe cleerli undirstonde al it, and esili reporte al it, and remembre al it, and kunne al it, perfitli and currauntli, and kunne reherce it, and talke it in a stable foorme of wordis, ^{93a}

without variaunce maad in wordis and processis, whanne it is at dyverse tymes rehercid, and but if thei mowe have recours therto, and to ech poynt therof redeli, whanne ever hede schal aske. And sotheli, forto speke of al the hool ful feith writen in the gospels and epistlis, it may not in this seid wise be tauzt, without that it be write, and but if the writing therof be delyvered to the clergie. Wherefore, oure al hool feith which is now bitakun to us in Scripture, myzte never bi kinde have be tauzt sufficientli to eny peple, without therof the scripture; and thouz ful manye a processe withynne the boondis of the gospels ben lawe of resoun and of kinde, zitt this that Crist tauzt it, and rehercid it, is feith, and so the al hool feith writen in the gospels is over long a tale forto be sufficientli leerned, without therof the writyng. And therefore, sithen neither the apostlis, neither eny othere clerkis, myzten have tauzt sufficientli the
93^b seid feith without scripture, and the peple myzte not, bi studyng in the scripture, have leerned without techers, it folowith nedis that Holi Scripture is more worthi ground of oure feith than is eny congregacioun of the clergie. O my sone, if thou woldist take hede, hou a tale or a tiding, bi the tyme that it hath runne thorouȝ iiij or v mennys mouthis, takith pacchis and cloutis, and is chaungid in dyvers parties, and turned into lesingis,

and al for defaute of therof the writing; and hou that langagis, whos reulis ben not writen, as ben Englisch, Freensch, and manye othere, ben chaungid withynne 3eeris and cuntrees, that oon man of the oon cuntre, and of the oon tyme, my3te not, or schulde not kunne undirstonde a man of the othere kuntre, and of the othere tyme; and al for this, that the seid langagis ben not stabili and fundamentali writen, thou schuldist ful soone, and ful sikirli deeme, and so schulde ech wel avisid man deeme, that the long tale of the gospels my3te 94^a never, bi eny long tyme, be treuli and aftir oon maner toolde, and reportid, and remembrid of dyvers folk, without therof the writing; but manye a cloute schulde therto be sette, and manye a good pece therof be takun away, and moche strijf schulde ther be aboute the trewe rehercel therof, as which were trewe rehercel therof, and whiche were not so, but if the same long tale of the gospels were write. And therefore ther may no teching of the clergie ground, weel and sufficientli to us, oure seid feith. And 3itt the writyng maad and purveied bi God, and bi the apostlis, and bi the apostlis heerers, of thilk same longe tale, may grounde sufficientli the same feith, in ech clerk or lay man notabili resoned forto undirstonde what he redith in the Newe Testament, thou3 he not leerne the same feith bi eny general counseil, or eny

multitude of clerkis togidere to be gaderid, thou3
 94^b peraventure he schal have nede at sumwhile, and
 in summe textis of the seid scripture, seche to
 have exposicioun hadde bi the eldist party of the
 chirche, ioyned to the apostlis, and lyvyng in tyme
 of the apostlis, as so schal be tau3t in *The book of
 feith* in latyn, and in *The book of the chirche*.

Verili, as y may trowe, thorou3 al the tyme of
 werre during these xl 3eer bitwixe Ynglond and
 Fraunce, wist y not scant iii or iiiii men, whiche
 wolden accorde thorou3 out, in telling how a toun
 or a castel was wonne in Fraunce, or hou a batel
 was doon there, thou3 thilk men were holden ri3t
 feithful men and trewe, and thou3 ech of hem
 wolde have swore that it was trewe what he tolde,
 and that he was present and sawe it. Wherefore,
 bi al resoun, in lijk maner it wolde have be, and
 was in dede, of the reporte of the dedis and wordis
 of Crist, eer thei were writen bi the evangelistis.
 And that in dede it was so, therynne witnessith
 Luk, in the prolog of his gospel, and seith that
 therfore he was movid forto write the gospel
 95^a which he wrote, and so bi lijk skile for the same
 cause the othere evangelistis gaven hem to writing.
 Hou ever therfore my3te it have be wel and trewe
 of oure feith, if it schulde have come to us bi
 reporte of heering, and bi mouth speking, without
 therof the writing. Also, what that ever eny

counseil of clergie, or eny clergie withoute gadering into counseil, techith as feith, ever the clergie refrerith his so maad teching of feith into Holi Scripture. And therfore nedis the Holi Scripture is more worthi ground for oure feith, than is the clergie of the hool chirche in erthe. And if thou wolte wite of what scripture y meene, certis it is the writing of the Oold Testament, and of the Newe Testament, for it witnessith al the feith, or ellis, at the lest, wel nyȝ al the feith which Crist sechith of us. ȝhe, and the writing of the Newe Testament confeermeth al the Oold Testament, in that that the wrytyng of the Newe Testament refrerith us oft into the writing of the Oold Testament, as M^t. 26 c. ; 95^b M^r. xii c., and M^r. 14^e c., and 15^e c. And Luk 24^e c. ; Johnne v^e c^r., and 17^e c^r., and 19^e c^r., and 20^e c^r. ; and in manye placis of the epistlis in the Newe Testament.

Ferthermore, sone, not oonli the writing of the al hool feith in the gospels is so necessarie to the peple, being a this side the apostlis ; but also the same writing, maad and writen of the apostlis, were riȝt necessarie, as bi wey of kinde and of resoun to the same apostlis, that bi the writing of the apostlis, whiche thei wroten, thei hemsilf myȝten holde in mynde the multitude of tho trouthis there writen. And that bi recurse to be maad of hem into the seid writing, leste that

therof the perfizt mynde schulde, bi kinde, falle away from hem, whilis thei were so moche in dyverse troublis y-occupied, and so therfore ful opene it is, that the writing of our feith is more necessarie ground to us for oure feith, than is eny congregacioun of clerkis, bigunne sithen the deeth of the apostlis.

96^a For answer to the textis bifore alleggid of the Oold Testament, in the first argument, it is to be seid that thou³ bi tho textis it is had that fadris schulden teche by mouthe her sones, and her sones sones, the lawis of God, and the benefetis of God, 3itt bi tho textis it is not hadde that thilk teching, to be doon bi mouthe, schulde have be sufficient teching to tho sones, and sones sones, without writing; and therfore tho textis maken not into the entent into which the first argument hem alleggith; namelich, sithen in the processis of the same textis it is hadde among that it was bede with al this, that the fadris schulden teche her sones bi mouthe; it is had in the last of tho textis, that is to seie, which is alleggid, Deutron. xi^e c^r., that tho same fadris, and alle the peple, schulde have Goddis lawis, and Goddis benefetis in writing. Forwhi, it is seid there that thei schulden have tho lawis and benefetis bifore her
96^b izen. And this is ynou³ for answeare to tho textis. More thing according to this answeare and con-

feernyng it thou maist se sone in *The book of leernyng*, in thi vulgar tunge.

But thanne, fadir, if it was so necessarie writing to be hadde upon Cristen feith, whi was this writyng of our feith so long tyme deferrid, eer it was maad bi the apostlis, as that Mathew wrote his gospel in the vii^e 3ere aftir Cristis ascencioun, and Mark wrote in the x^e 3ere aftir Cristis ascencioun, as may be had bi croniclis of Martyn, and Luk wrote aftir other writers of the gospels, as he seith him silf in the prolog of his gospel, and Ion wrote aftir alle the othere, as manye men trowen? Also whi wrote not ech apostle as wel as summe? And also whi wroten not thei to ech countre?

Sone, answeere to thi first questioun may be this. Our Lord is wisist, and he is, forto lede us into our kunnyng to be had in profitabilist maner, alwey rediest. And for as myche as peple, to 97^a knowe bi experience hou necessarie it was to hem forto have her feith writen, was to hem more profitable, than forto it knowe without experience, therfore God so schope that the feith schulde bi a notable tyme be preched oonli bi word to the peple, that thei myȝten therbi take experience that preching of the al hole feith bi word oonli, were not sufficient without therof the writing; and thanne that therfore the peple schulde desire to have the feith writen; and the apostlis schulden

se the same treuthe bi experience, and schulden consente forto write to the peple the same feith, which bifore bi parcellis thei prechiden bi word. An other cause myzte have be this : a preciose thing, whanne it is litzli and soone zovun, without long bifore goyng desire to have it, schal be the lasse sett bi, whanne it is receyved ; and for as myche as the writyng, conteynyng oure al hool feith, is preciose and ouzte not be sette litil bi, 97^b neither be feyntli and unworthili receyved, therfore God so schope that it was longe of the peple desirid, eer thei it receyveden, as for lijk skile God differreth ful holy mennys boonys, for that bi her longe desiring, and preiyng, and abiding aftir it, thei schulden the more ioie have, and the more thanke God whanne thei it receyveden. Another cause rennyng herwith myzte be, that the apostlis hadden not grettist leisers, for persecuciouns, that thei myzten anoon in the bigynnyng have writen, and peraventure longe tyme in the biginnyng the apostlis prechiden not, neither mynystriden to the peple but a fewe articlis of feith, as were these :—of Cristis comyng, and of his Incarnacioun, and of the cause whi he came ; and longe tyme unnethis myzte suffice forto bringe the peple into consente and bileeve of these fewe feithis. Also, scolers in ech kinde of scole schulden not be oppressid, in the bigynnyng of her scole,

with over manye maters to be mynystrid to hem at oonys, or sudenli, or over soone. And therfore, 98a a good while bi 3eeris, scolers in the scole of Cristendoom herden parcelmele the feith prechid, eer the hool summe and birthen therof was delyvered to hem bi writing. And thus myche for answer to thi first questioun.

If it be trewe, that Ioon the evangelist wrote his gospel eer than it is seid that he wrote, and so that he wrote his gospel bifore his comyng from exile, as therto may be hadde greet motyve bi the writyngis of Seynt Denys Ariopagite, bi cause Ioon hadde writen his gospel eer Dynys wrote hise bokis, thanne answeere to thi secunde questioun may be this. Ri3t as what is necessarie to a comounte is to be purveied fore, so what is waast, or comberose, and chargeose to a comounte is to be left of and to be avoidid; and for as moche as whanne Mathew, Mark, Luk, and Joon hadden write, the othere apostlis sizen these writingis, and sizen that these writingis were sufficient to expresse the comyng of Crist, the birthe of Crist, the lyvyng of Crist, the teching of Crist, and therfore the othere apostlis wolden not, 98b as for the same maters, combre the peplis wittis with eny more writingis therupon; and that what oon apostle or a disciple wrote alle the othere apostlis, and disciplis knewen, we mowe take

marke bi this, that Petir, in his ii^e epistil, the last c^r., knowlechith that he wiste of Poulis writing, and bi a greet liklihode he knewe what the othere writers wroten, and, bi as myche greet liklihood, Poul wist what Petir wrote, and what ech other writer wrote ; and therfore he himsilf wrote noon gospel, but hilde him content with the gospels writen of othere, nameliche sithen Luk was felowe to Poul in myche of alle Poulis labouris, and therfore to Poul myȝte not be straunge and unwist the writing of Luk. And also, that it was not to Poul unknowun, it seemeth wel her bi. For in the first epistle to Corinthians the xi^e c., Poul rehercith the processe of Luk, the xxii chapter, wel nyȝ word bi word. And thus myche, sone, 99^a for answeare to thi ii^e questioun.

To thi iii^e questioun y answeare thus. The apostlis knewen weel, as thei myȝten wel knowe, bi resoun, that the writyng of oure general feith, wole serve like wele to peple of ech cuntre, as to peple of oon cuntre ; and thei wisten that the oon same writing myȝte, and schulde renne from oon cuntre into an othere cuntre, like as Poul in his epistle to the Colocen. the last c^r.¹ biddith that thilk same epistle schulde be radde to the peple which ben callid Laodocenses, and therfore it was no nede to make to dyverse

¹ A later contracted reference from the MS. margin.

cuntries dyvers writingis, in this wise dyverse that thei schulden conceyve dyverse maters, thouȝ the writing of oon and of the same mater myȝte be writen or translatid into dyverse langagis ; and so is the iii questioun assoilid.

Fadir, y perceyve wel hou ȝe han declarid ful wel that it, what was taken to prove the seid ii premysse, in the first principal argument, is untrewē, and therfore it is to be denyed ; but ȝe han not answerid to the argumentis for 99^b the proof of it what was so taken into the proof of the same seid ii^e premysse ; therfore, fadir, answere ȝe to hem.

Sone, the first argument bifore maad for proof of it what was taken to prove the seid ii^e premysse, goith upon processis and textis of the Oold Testament, whiche proven no thing the entent wherto thou bringist hem in thine argument. Forwhi, tho textis wole no more than this, that God wolde the oold lawe, and the oold feith be leerned bi heering of word ; but, certis, herof folewith not that God wolde, or meened it to be leerned so, and in lijk maner sufficientli. And therfore the textis hurten not myn entent, neither thei proven the entent, wherfore thou brouȝtist hem forth into thin argument. Also the contrarie, that is to seie that God meened thilk leernyng, bi word herd, was not

sufficient to the clergie thanne, and to the peple thanne, apperith wel bi this, that God bede the oold lawe to be writen, and forto so bidde
 100a had be yvel and in veyn, if the teching and the leernyng of the same lawe, bi word oonli, hadde be sufficient.

To the ii^e argument maad into the same entent, y answere thus. Thou3 a fewe usagis and customes in monestaries mowe be born in mynde without writing, hou schulde therof folowe that so longe a tale, as is the storie of the iiii gospels, my3te be born in mynde bi leernyng of word without therof eny writing? That this schulde folowe hath no colour, and therefore thilk argument is lizt to be in this now seid maner answerid and assoilid.

CHAPTER III

FADIR, azens 3ou metith this, that the feith which was in the biginnyng of the world, and was contynued forth into the daies of Moyses, was not writen. Forwhi, Moyses, which was aftir the biginnyng of the world bi xx hundrid 3eeris, wrote the book of Genesis, and as it is seid comounli, he wrote it bi inspiracioun, and bi such prophecie as wherbi thingis passid ben knowen above power to knowe hem bi kinde, 100*b* and 3itt thilk feith was a longe tale, and a longe storie, as is opene bi the book of Genesis, with rehercels ful hard to mynde, upon generaciouns of persoonys, and upon the names of persoonys; wherfore it semeth that as wel the storie of the gospels my3te have be sufficientli tau3t of the apostlis, and have be leerned of the other clergi and of the peple withoute writing.

Sone, if thou, or eny other man ellis, were sikir or hadde eny greet liklihood herto, and gretter than to the contrarie, that ther was no writing of the feith in the eldist tyme, fro the bigynnyng of

the world into the flood of Noe, and fro thennes into the writing of Moyses, thin argument were stronge. But certis, noon sikirnes, neither eny such liklihood is hadde, but ful strong liklihood to the contrarie is had. Forwhi, soone aftir the flood of Noe, ther was leernyng of the vii sciencis, 101a and writing maad in ii pilers, oon of bras, and another of erthe, and also in the same tyme ther was leernyng and wrytyng of wicchecraft, or of nycromancie, as the Maistir of Stories writith, in the chapter of the toure of Babel. And if worldli men in that tyme were so bisi in worldli leernyng and writing, it is not to be trowid but lijk bisi were summe of manye goostli men, in leernyng and writing of gostli maters, perteyning to the feith, and the servyce of God, and to the eend wherto man was maad. Wherefore, it is more likli that in tho daies soone aftir the flood of Noe ther was writing of feith, perteynyng to God, and to mannys governyng and eending, than that ther was noon such in tho daies anoon aftir the flood of Noe. Also, longe bifore the flood of Noe, Ennok foonde lettris, and wrote bookis as the Maistir of Stories seith. And this Ennok was a passing holy man, as the Bible witnessith ; 101b and he lyved in the daies of Adam. Wherefore, sithen it is so that, such as a man is, such is his leernyng, studyng, and writing, it is more

likli that he wrote holi wondirful thingis of the feith, and namelich sithen he lyved in the daies of Adam, which couthe ful myche teche Ennok what he schulde write in such mater, than that he wrote eny other worldli thing oonli. And sithen Noe was a ful holi man, it is likli that he hadde, and kept sum and myche of this writing with him, saaf in his schippe, whilis the flood durid, namelich sithen he prechide an hundrid wyntre to the peple eer the flood came, that thei schulde leeve her synne; and certis suche preching couthe not have be doon without greet kunnyng of ful goostli thingis. And also it muste be bi al liklihood that Ennok delyvered to his owne sone Mathusale the same goostli writing, which Ennok wrote, and this Matussale, the sone of Ennok, lyvede with Noe sixe hundrid wintre, and therefore it is to be seid that Noe hadde ful myche ^{102a} and hize kunnyng of feith, and of this writyng; for so good a man as Noe was wolde not leeve unaspied so profitable a writing. And what he had so profitabili in writing, he kept saaf in his schip, and delyverd¹ aftir to hise sones Sem, Cam, and Iapheth; which Sem, clepid otherwise Melchisedech, lyved into the daies of Abraham. Wherefore Abraham bi dilygence of his holynes,

¹ So in MS.

schapide him to receyve the same writing of Sem, and bi liklihode Abraham bitook it to Ysaac, and Ysaac to Jacob, and Jacob to hise sones; and hou likli it is that Ennok wrote what he leerned of Adam, perteynyng to God and to men, so likli it is that Noe, or sum othere, wrote what he leernyd of Matussale, that felle in the daies of Ennok, and of Matussale; and Sem, or sum othere in the daies of Seem, wrote what he leernyd of Noe, that felle in the daies of Noe. And Abraham, or sum othere in his daies, wrote what he herd of Seem, that fel in the daies
102^b of Sem, which was clepid Melchisedech. Forwhi, even liklihode was of ech of these casis, as was in eny oon of hem. And so at the laste, Moises gaderide al this togider, and made a book therof which is clepid Genesis; and certis this is more likli, bi storie bifore alleggid, and bi resoun togidere, than forto seie that Moyses had bi inspiracioun without eny manys bifore ȝovun to him informacioun, namelich sithen we owen forto not feyne, forge, allegge, putte, trowe, or holde eny myracle to be doon, save whanne nede compellith us therto, that is to seie, that we mowe not save the caase otherwise bi liklihood of resoun. And certis, sithen in this case ther is more liklihode of resoun, forto seie that Moyses hadde sufficient informacioun bifore of writingis, hou

he schulde make the boke of Genesis, than there is liklihode to this, that he had noon such now seid informacioun, therfore in this case it is not to renne into myracle, thouȝ dyvers doctouris in this case, and in special Gregory upon Ezechiel, without myche avisement, and ^{103a} soone moved bi devocioun, so¹ doon. Also, of sum thing doon bifore the flood of Noe, whereof no mensioun is maad in the writing of Moyses, we have knowing in storie as of this, that Lameth was an hunter, and dymme of sizt, and that he was lad bi a ȝong man in hunting, and that he schotte Caym bi dressing of the seid leder, and thanne he with his bowe slowe the same leder; of this thing, so untauzt in Moyses writing, we myȝte not have had knowing, if there had not be eny writing bifore Noes flood of thingis which bifelle bifore the same flood. Wherefore, such writing of stories was bifore Noes flood. And thanne ferther, if such storiyng of worldli chauncis was writen bifore Noes flood, moche rather storiyng of worthi goostli thingis was writen bifore the same flood. And if this be trewe, thanne suche writen stories weren kept saaf bi Noe in his schippe, for skile bifore maad, and so thei came aftirward into the knowing ^{103b} of Moyses, as is bifore argued, and Moyses com-

¹ MS. 'soo,' an imperfect erasure of soon.

piled the book Genesis out of hem, and whanne the bokis of Moyses weren hadde, the othere bokis fillen out of use, as it is likli to bifalle, for so it fallith in other lijk casis.

O fadir, me thenketh 3e holden a ful resonable wey in this mater, and such a wey which hath more likli evidencis for it than hath the contrarie party; and therfore 3oure wey ou3te, bi lawe of kinde, and undir perel of vice and of synne, be holden til gretter evydence be founden to the contrarie, thanne ben the evydencis making for this party. But certis, out of this folowith, as semeth to me, that we schulde holde this party, that Esdras renewid not the Oold Testament in writing bi 3ift of inspiracioun, as is comounli holde; but that he renewid the Oold Testament in this wise, that he maad be writen and multiplied manye bokis of the oold testament, manye mo than there were bifore, and that for 3ele which that he hadde
 104^a to this, that Goddis lawe schulde be wel knowe, thou3 of ech kinde of tho bokis sum copie was bifore. Forwhi, like evydencis ben that Esdras hadde copies of the oold lawe, as ben evydencis that Moyses hadde copies, forto write or compile bi hem the book of Genesis; 3he, gretter evydencis to holde this now seid affirmative parti, thanne ben the evidencis for to holde the contrarie negative party.

Sone, y hold wel with thi conceyte in this mater, and the evydencis therto ben these. Hou ever yvel the peple of Iewis at eny tyme was, 3itt thei were never without summe holi lovers and kepers of the lawe among hem. Forwhi, whanne grettist ydolatrie was usid in Iewri, in the daies of King Achab, 3 Ks. 19,¹ so fer forth that the prophete Hely wened and seide to God that, of alle the Iewis, ther was noon but he aloon left alyve which lovyd and kepte the lawe; the Lord answerid to Hely, and seide that it was not so, for he kepte to him, he seide, more than v hundrid in Israel, which never bowid her knees to Baal, that is to seie to ^{104b} the fals god, which in tho daies was worschapid openli thoruz al Israel. And if this was trewe in tho daies of grettist ydolatrie, that ther was manye privey lovers and kepers of the lawe; bi like skile it schulde be trowid that, in ech other tyme, there weren suche lovers and kepers of the lawe; and in lijk it was in ech tyme, whanne Ierusalem was in thraldom bi enemyes without forth, and whanne the Iewis weren translatid into Babilonye, and whilis thei dwelliden there, but so it is that no man lettrid wolde caste him to be verri knower of the lawe, and therfore a verri keper therof, but if he wolde caste him to have the same lawe in writing.

¹ A contracted reference from the margin.

Wherefore, in alle tymes of the Iewis, bothe whilis
 thei were in the lond of Israel, and whilis thei were
 in the lond of Babilonye, there were among
 summe of hem bokis writen of the lawe, and usid
 of hem, thouȝ the lawe writen in summe bokis was
 brent in the brennyng of the temple. Also,
 Jeremye lyvede and abode in Ierusalem whilis the
 105^a laste and grettist captivite of the citee was maad,
 and whilis the Iewis weren laste translatid, and the
 temple was distroied; and herof he proficied and
 wrote his prophecie, a litil bifore eer this grettist
 and last captivite was doon. And aftir that this
 captivite was doon, he abiding in Ierusalem with
 the releef, and the rescaile of the Iewis, wrote his
 book clepid the Trenys, but al this was not likli to
 have be, if Ieremye schulde not have had with him
 the book of the lawe, into the keping of which
 lawe he so ofte prechid and stirid the peple;
 wherfore it is to be trowid that Ieremye had with
 him writen alwey a book of the lawe, thouȝ sum
 book conteynyng the same lawe was brent in the
 temple. And for lijke skile it is to be trowid that
 Ezechiell hadde also the lawe writen, which Ezechiell
 lyved in tyme of this grettist and last thraldom,
 and was caried into Babilonye fro Ierusalem with
 the grete route, and in Babiloine, the v^e ȝere of
 this thraldom, he bigan to prophecie there in
 105^b Babiloine. Also, sumwhat bifore the thraldoms

of Ierusalem, the King Ioas maad the book of the lawe be knowun and be puplischid¹ ful myche, which longe bifore was unknowun as to the preestis, and to the more multitude of the peple ; wherfore it is lijk that in this kingis daies there were writen in grete noumbre manye bokis of the lawe, nameli sithen the peple were thanne brouzt into a greet devocioun anentis the lawe, as it is open. Also, in ech tyme of Iewis there weren summe prophetis, as may be takun bi the prologgis of Ierom in to the bookis of prophetis, and also bi the text, and to hem it longid to not be unknowers of the lawe, in as moche as God comaundid his lawe to be of his peple knowun, and without writing such so longe a lawe myzte not be knowun, wherfore at alle daies of the Iewis, bothe in Israel, and in Babilonye, there were bokis al redi of the lawe writen. And herto wolde serve ful openli the storie of Thobie, and ^{106a} the storie of Susanne, Daniel 13^o c^r, ne were that thei ben apocrifis. Also Daniel, Esdras, Neomyas, Zozobabel, Mardoche, Hester, and othere were keepers of the lawe, whilis thei weren freeli in Babiloine inhabiting, as the storie of the Bible makith mencion. Wherfore it is like that thei hadden the lawe writen, namelich sithen thei myzten sende and have messages, to and fro Ierusalem and Babiloine. And if al this be trewe,

¹ So in MS.

certis it is likli ynou³ that whanne Esdras and Zozobabel came fro Babiloine into Ierusalem, for to bilde a³en the citee and the temple, thei hadden bokis al redi writen of the lawe, and thanne herof folowingli this, that Esdras renewid the v bokis of Moyses, and alle the stories into his daies, is to be undirstonde thus, that he wrote, or provokid and ordeynyde to be writen and multiplied, manye bokis of the same lawe, in greet noumbre, wherof was not but fewe bifore. And if this be trewe, as
106b it hath more likli evydencis to be trowid for trewe, than hath his contrarie partie, it folewith that forto sieie this, whiche summe doctouris comounli holden with the Maistir of Stories, that Esdras bi inspiracioun wrote, withoute eny copi, alle the v bokis of Moyses, and alle the othere bokis of stories and of prophecies into hise daies, is not but a feynynd thing ; for it is seid without sufficient therto servyng evydencis, and therfore this seid opinioun of Esdras, is writing bi privey myraclus inspiracioun, is worthi to be leid aside, nameliche sithen to privey myraclis we schulden not renne, forto defende oure opinioun or oure answeere bi hem, without that sufficient evydence therto serveth. For ellis there my³te noon opinioun be overcome bi strengthe of argument, hou false ever the opinioun were, so that he includid no repugnaunce, such as God my³te not do bi myracle.

CHAPTER IV

FADIR, aftir al this, what is seid for answere to the first principal argument, and what is sunken in bi 107^a occasioun of the same answere, it is now tyme that 3e biginne answere to the ii^e principal argument.

Sone, thou seiest sooth, and therefore, as for answere to the ii^e and iii^e principal argumentis togidere, the ii premysse in ever either of hem is to be denied. Forwhi, sithen bi answer maad to the first principal argument it is declarid that the apostlis myzten not, without writing, teche sufficientli oure al hool ful feith, wherof now is the Newe Testament writen, it folewith that thei tauzten not, without writing, sufficientli the same seid al hool ful feith ; which is azens and contrarie to the ii^e premysse, in the ii^e principal argument ; neither thei tauzten without writing principali the same al hool ful feith, which is azens and contrarie to the ii^e premysse, in the iii^e principal argument. And that, for as myche as what the apostlis myzten not do sufficientli or principali, thei diden not sufficientli, neither principali. And so, as y now 107^b

bifore seid, the bothe ii premyssis, in the ii^e and iii^e principal argumentis, ben to be denyed. Ferthermore, thou³ Crist bede as thou alleggist, M^r. and M^r. the laste chapitris, hise apostlis to preche al the hool gospel, and so al the hool feith to ech creature, bi parcel mel, in word speking at dyverse tymes, and thou³ thei fulfillid this comaundement, zitt herof folowith not that Crist as herynne bade hem preche the gospel, and the al hool feith, as sufficientli or principali to be doon; for Crist wolde that a good preching, not sufficient neither principal, schulde go bifore the teching, ful and sufficient and principal, which principal and sufficient¹ teching aftirward schulde be doon bi writing oonli, or ellis bi word and writing togidere; for, as the philosophir seith, kinde in his worching biginneth fro inperfit, proceding and growing into perfit. And man doith in the same wise in hise
 108a werkis of craft. And thou³ God, the auctor and maker of kinde, do in the same wise in hise werkis, it is not to be wondrid, but it is to be wel preisid; forwhi, in that his worching accordith wel with oure resoun. And so the ii premyssis in thin bothe argumentis, maad for provyng of the ii principal premyssis, in the ii^e and iii^e principal argumentis, ben not groundid upon the textis of Mathew and of Mark in her last chapitris, and

¹ MS. sufficient.

ben to be denied. And this wise, sufficient answer is maad to the ii^e and to the iii^e principal argumentis togidere.

For answer to the iii^e principal argument, thou schalt undirstonde that Poul seith, ad Ephes. iii^e c^r., thus : *Oon is the Lord, oon feith, and oon baptim.* And 3itt the baptim of this man, here in Ynglond, is not the same baptym in being, and in kinde, which is the baptym of another man in Fraunce ; for ech man, as he is dyvers in being fro ech other man, so his baptim, and his sacramental waisching is dyvers in being fro ech other mannys baptim and 1086 waisching in water. Nevertheles, this baptim of this man in Ynglond is oon in significacioun, and in representacioun, with ech othere mannys baptim in Fraunse. Forwhi alle tho baptymes signifien, representen¹ and sacramenten oon thing, which is this, as Poul seith, Ro. vi^e c^r. that ech man owith be deed and biried to all synnys, and rise into a newe lyf in clenness of vertu. Also in lijk maner, the chirche of Ynglond is oon chirche with the chirche of Fraunce, but hou ? Certis not in being, in kinde, and in substaunce ; fforwhi the peple being here is not the peple being there ; but thei ben oon in reputacioun

¹ In the MS. there originally stood (now erased) 'representen with ech other mannys baptim.' The corrected reading is from the MS. margin.

of auctorite, of feith, of power, and of iuresdiccioun ; that is to seie, for the oon of these chirchis hath lijk power and iuresdiccioun to the othere 3oven to hem fro God. And in lijk maner
109^a it is to be undirstonde, whanne it is seid that the chirche, whiche now is, is the same chirche which was, this same tyme a thousind winter, or which was in the daies of the apostlis, or that the chirche of God is alwei oon, not in being, or in kinde, or substaunce. Forwhi, the peple is not now and thanne oon, neither alwey oon, but oon in reputacioun ; and 3itt not in al maner reputacioun, but in reputacioun of lijk feith, and of lijk power, and of lijk iuresdiccioun, 3ovun fro God. But certis, open it is to ech mannys resoun, that thou3 the chirche now lyvyng be, in this seid maner of reputacioun, the same chirche whiche the apostlis weren, 3itt it nedith not to folowe that this chirche, now lyvyng, hath like moche kunnyng and power forto witnes oure feith, as hadde the chirche which the apostlis weren, neither it folowith that this chirche, now lyvyng, hath more kunnyng and power forto wittnesse, than hath the writing of the Newe Testament forto so wittnesse, thou3 it were so
109^b that the chirche of the apostlis hadde kunnyng and power forto so more wittnesse. And al herfore, for this chirche is not the same chirche in kinde, in being, and in substaunce, with the othere

seid chirche, ri3t as these persoonys ben not tho persoonys. And thilk chirche hadde informacioun of the feith, bi heering the apostlis, and the evangelistis, which the chirche now being hath not, but so sechith aftir forto have, bi reding in the writing of the apostlis and evangelistis. And so, sone, if thou woldist denie this argument, if it were maad to thee,—this chirche now lyvyng and the chirche of the apostlis weren oon, in the seid reputacioun, therfore as the apostlis weren in this degree of holi lyvyng, and my3ten do myraclis, speke with dyvers tungis, and write a Newe Testament, and witnesse that thei sawe Crist do and suffre, and herd him teche, so this chirche now being is lijk holi, and may do lijk greet myraclis, may speke with dyverse tungis, and write a Newe Testament, and witnesse that he 110a size Crist do and suffre and herde him teche,—even so, in lijk maner thou schalt be moved forto denie thin owne iiie principal argument, that it make no folowing. Which argument is this: the present chirche is alwey oon and the same with the chirche of the apostlis, wherfore, as the chirche of the apostlis groundid the feith more than scripture it groundith, therfore the chirche which now is, groundith more oure feith than scripture it groundith, hou ever it be of the conclusioun, or of the consequent of the

argument; which conclusioun or consequent, whether it be trewe or no, schal be tretid in *The book of the chirche* in latyn.

And ferthermore, sone, thou₃ thou woldist putte a successive aggregate of alle the apostlis, and of alle Cristen men, whiche ever weren, ben, and schulen be, to be the chirche of Crist, and therfore that ther is alwey, thorou₃ al tymes, oon and the same chirche in aggregat, being, kinde, and substance; 3itt herof folowith not that
 1106 hou ever kunnyng, holi, my₃ti, and worthi this aggregat was in eny tyme before, in his parties passid, so kunnyng, holi, my₃ti, and worthi this aggregat is now in hise parties now being; no more than folowith, if the successyve aggregate my₃te, as he was thanne in hise parties passid, do myraclis, that the same aggregat may do now as he is in hise parties now being; no more thanne it folowith if Ynglond sumtyme my₃te make such a conquest, therfore he schal be ever a power forto make lijk greet conquest. And therfore, sone, if thi iiie argument be maad in this wise:—the hool successive aggregat of clerkis is now, which was in the tyme of the apostlis, but in thilk tyme this aggregat was a worthier witnesser of our feith than was Scripture, therfore so is this aggregat now—certis this argument is not worth, for he concludith and makith no folowing. Nevertheles,

sone, forto putte and holde such a successive aggregat, in kinde, in propirte, without figurative speche, is azens good philsoophie, and therfore azens resoun and azens trouthe, as ful wel myzte be provyd if this place were according to trete IIIIa such mater. But whilis the putting and the holding therof hurtith not my present entent, y wole here lete the treeting therof passe undir suffraunce.

For answer to thi v^e principal argument, thou schal undirstonde that Scripture of the Newe Testament is not, thoruz ech parti of him, lijk in auctorite, in worthines, and in dignite. Forwhi, summe parties of Scripture techen to us feith, summe techen to us lawe of kinde, and of natural resoun, as the text in it silf wel schewith, and Austyn witnessith the same. Nevertheles this, that Crist tauzt thilk lawe of kinde and of resoun, wherof it is writen in Holi Writte that Crist hem tauzte, is feith. Forwhi, this, that he so tauzt hem, can not be leerned and founde bi mannys resoun, without therof a teller and a denouncer. Summe parties of the seid Scripture techen to us positive ordinauncis of Crist, as ben the sacramentis, and sum partie therof techen to us ordinauncis of sum apostle, as the lawe of bigamie, and that a womman¹ vowe not chastite before the

¹ So in MS.

lx^e 3eer of hir age. Now, sone, thou3 the clergie,
 that now is, and thou3 the pope that now is, may
 dispense with it that Scripture techith us the
 III b ordinaunce of an apostle, and may revoke it, as he
 may dispense with this, that Poul ordeynyd a bigam
 to not be deken or preest, i^e Thi. iii^e c^r. ; and with
 this, that Poul ordeynede a widowe to not take
 perpetual widewite, undir boond, eer she ben of
 lx^e winter, and but if sche hadde be wijf of oon
 man, i^e Thi. v^e cap. ; 3he and revoke these
 ii pointis, bicause that the pope is of lijk auctorite
 and of iuresdiccioun with ech or with the grettist
 of the apostlis ; 3itt herof folewith not that the
 clergie now lyvyng, or the pope now lyvyng, may
 dispense with this that Scripture techith as the
 positive ordynaunce of Crist, or that he may
 revoke eny of tho ordynauncis. Forwhi, so
 revoke or dispense my3te noon of the apostlis.
 And so, thou3 the chirche now lyvyng be evene
 in autorite and power with sum parti of Scripture,
 as with ful few parties of Scripture, as in
 this, forto make positive ordynauncis lijk as Holi
 Scripture bi power of the apostle maad, and forto
 II 2 a revoke thilk positive ordynaunce of Holi Scripture,
 maad bi the apostle, 3itt he is not evene in
 auctorite and power with al the Scripture of the
 Newe Testament, neither with manye othere parties
 therof.

To thi vi^e argument y answeare, graunting the first premysse, that the chirche now lyvyng hath power forto expowne, and interprete, and declare, the trewe undirstonding of Holi Scripture. And y denye the ii^e premysse, that even peer hath no power into his even peer. Forwhi, the sugget hath sum power upon his sovereyn, as for to loke upon him, forto speke to him, and forto warne him of hise harmes, and forto defende him, and suche othere. And so the chirche now being, 3he, and ech thrifty wel sped studient in divinite, hath power forto declare and expowne Holi Scripture, 3he, and ech good gramarien hath power to construe Scripture, so that as the verri dewe, litteral undirstonding we schulden aske and leerne of a greet learned sad divine, rather than of another 3onger and lasse leernyd divine; so we schulde aske and leerne it of the universal or general hool clergie, rather than of eny particuler persoone or persoonys, save in the excepcioun spokun oft, in the first parti of this book, in the vii^e c^r., and in othere chapters aftir there folowing. And therfore, as it folowith not herof that ech thrifti divine, and ech gramarien, is more worthi forto grounde feith than is Holi Scripture, so it folewith not that the chirche now lyvyng, or the clergie now lyvyng, is more worthi forto grounde feith than is Holi Scripture. Sone, manye kindis

of powers ther ben, the even peer hath no power of constreynyng upon his even peer, that is to seie forto make his even peer to do what he wole not do in thilke kinde of werk, in which thei ben evene peers; and ȝitt oon evene peer may revoke and relese that, that the othere evene peere ordeyneth, or biddith to be do, or doith in dede; as we seen that oon executour revokith and relesith what the othere ioined to him executour
 113^a ordeyneth, biddith, or doith, namelich bi the lawe of Ynglond; and in this case is ech pope with ech of the apostlis.

As for answer to the vii^e principal argument, y seie that power forto interprete, expowne, and declare which is the riȝt sense of Scripture, is not but a ful litil power upon Scripture, as power forto construe Scripture aftir rewlis of gramer is a ful litil power upon Scripture, but ȝitt moche lasse than the othere power now spokun. Forwhi, so bi these powers no thing is takun away fro Scripture, what he had bifore, neither eny thing is sette of the newe to Scripture, what Scripture hadde not bifore, neither eny thing is comaundid to be, or to not be, aȝens the comaunding, or the nylling of scripture. And that, bicause this seid power of interpreting, expownyng, declaring, and construyng, is not but a power of kunnyng oonli, forto schewe and make open

the thing of Scripture, which is in Scripture al redi bfore, thou₃ priveli and hid ; riȝt as the preest 113^b in lent tyme drawith the lent veile, and therbi makith open to the peple what was bfore in the auter al redi, thou₃ not seen of the peple. Wherefore the first premysse in thi vii^e principal argument is untrewē, and to be denyed, whanne it is seid thus ; what ever thing nedith to have upon him an interpreter, an expowner, or a declarer, nedith to have the same thing as his overer and worthier. And whi this is untrewē, it is now seid ; forwhi, ellis a dekene, ȝhe the parisch clerk, were worthier than the preest stonding at the auter, whanne the clerk drawith aside the lent veile. And also if the seid first premysse were trewe, thanne Scripture were worthier than sche her silf is, and sche were overer to her silf, which is repugnaunce. Forwhi, Scripture ful oft expowneth hir silf, bi as moche as bi the reding of Scripture in oon parti, a man schal learne which is the trewe undirstonding of Scripture in an other parti, wherynne he doutid or unknewe bfore. Also, sone, the iugis which 114^a the king makith in his rewme, forto iuge alle cause after the lawe which he and his parlament maken, ben not so worthi forto grounde riȝtwisnes in causis, as the seid lawe is. Forwhi, al that thei han to iuge riȝtwisnes in causis, thei han of thilk lawe, and ȝitt the same seid iugis han

power bi her greet kunnyng, forto declare what is the trewe entent of the lawe writen, or not writen, whanne other not so kunnyng persooones in the lawe as thei ben, douten therynne, or not so fer seen therynne. And therfore bi lijk maner, in this present purpos, it is that thou; the clergie, or sum of the clergie, bi her greet leernyng have power or kunnyng forto declare to sympler folk which is the verri sense and undirstonding of Scripture, 3itt herof folowith not that the clergie, or thilk persooone of the clergie so declaring, is worthier in weie of grounding what Scripture was ordeyned to ground, bi his dew undirstonding of
 114^b treuthe, than is the same Scripture in him silf forto so ground. For certis, it may be that sum oon symple persooone as in fame, or in state, is wiser forto knowe, iuge, and declare what is the trewe sense of a certeyn porcioun of Scripture, and what is the treuthe of sum article, and that for his longe studyng, laboring, and avising ther-upon, than is a greet general conceil. Forwhi, ful oft it is seen that oon persooone in a general counceil redressith al the counceil fro that that thei wolden ordeyne; as y have rad, if oon symple persooone had not azenstonde bi his resounis, a general counceil wolde have ordeynyd that preestis schulde have be weddid to wijves if thei wolden; and also y have rad, in the *Thre departid Storie*, that

if Pafnucius¹ hadde not reclaimed in the greet counceil of Nice, there hadde be ordeynyd that tho preestis, which thanne hadde wijves, schulden have left her wijves, and schulden have be devorcid fro hem.

For answer to thi viii^e argument, thou schalt undirstonde that it is not oon and the same, forto 115^a trowe a thing to be, and forto trowe to the same thing. Forwhi, y may trowe the sowdan of Babilonye to be, and 3itt it nedith not therfore that y trowe to him. And in lijk maner, it is not oon and the same, forto bileeve a thing to be, and forto bileeve to thilk thing. Forwhi, y may and ou3te bileeve the feend to be, and 3itt y ou3te not therbi forto bileeve to the feende; wherfore it is not oon and the same, forto bileeve oon universal chirche of God in erthe to be, and forto bileeve to thilk oon universal chirche. And sithen it is so that bi thilk article, putte into the comoun vulgar crede, y bileeve the holi universal chirche, we ben not tau3t as bi strengthe of thilk wordis forto bileeve other than this, that oon holi universal chirche is, and what folowith therof; evene as bi lijk articlis in the same comoun crede, bi lijk tenour of wordis, we ben tau3te to bileeve oon baptyme to be, for3evenes of synnys to be, everlasting lyf to be; and not bi tho articlis forto 115^b

¹ So a note on the margin.

bileeve to oon baptim, and forto bileve to for-
 3evenes of synmys, and forto bileeve to everlasting
 lyf, as schal be schewid better her aftir in this
 same ii^e parti, the vii^e c^r,¹ wherfore folowith that
 bi the tenour of thilk article in the comoun crede,
 in which, and bi which we ben tauzt forto bileeve
 oon holi universal chirch to be, we ben not tauzt
 forto bileeve to the holi universal chirche, that is
 to seie, forto bileeve that the holi universal chirche
 seith and techith trouthe; so that, if we be bounde
 forto bileeve to the holi universal chirche in this
 now seid undirstonding, it muste rise bi sum othere
 fundament than bi thilk article in the comoun vulgar
 crede, which in thin viii^e argument thou alleggist.
 Whi the article to be bileeved, that oon universal
 chirche of God is, was putte into the comoun crede,
 schal be sumwhat tretid here aftir in this same ii^e
 116a parti the vii^e c^r,¹ and more sumwhere ellis in latyn.
 Nevertheles schortli to seie here; soon aftir the
 apostlis, rosen heretikis, and summe of hem
 helden that ther were dyverse chirchis of God
 in erthe, and that thei were a chirche of God
 bi hem silf. And for as myche as the grete
 fadris in the chirche hadden abhomynacioun herof,
 thei puttiden into the comoun crede forto bileeve
 oon hool universal chirche to be, with hise parties

¹ An important hint of what the missing chapters of this book contained.

not discording oon fro othere in feith of God. And this is fer fro this, forto bileve nedis to thilk universal chirche in alle casis. This is ynow, O my sone, here for answeere to thin viii^e principal argument.

Also it is to be undirstonde that 'catholik' is as myche to seie as general, and therfore catholik feith is as myche to seie as general, and universal feith, and catholik chirche is as myche to seie as general, or universal chirche. This wole good and trewe gramer, and this wolen oold doctouris of divinite, as Ysider and Bede in her writingis. And all 116b witti men knowen that tho propir significaciouns of wordis in latyn, ou3ten be take of grammer. Also, orthodoxe is as myche to seie as ri3t glorie, or the thing which is worthi ri3t glorie, and therfore al trewe feith, thou3 it be particuler, ou3te be clepid orthodoxe feith, thou3 not ech feith ou3te be clepid catholik feith, and ech trewe feithful particuler chirche ou3te be clepid orthodoxe chirche, thou3 not ech such particuler feithful chirche ou3te be clepid catholik chirche, that is to seie, universal or general chirche. And 3itt men now late, not so weel leerned in latin and in gramer as good were that thei weren, and as the oold scole of gramer brou3te forth men leerned, han brou3te into a viciose use now late bi ignoraunce of trewe grammer, forto calle a thing catholik, for

that it is orthodoxe, even as, for defaute of sufficient leernyng in gramer, men bigynnen forto bringe into use forto seie in latyn *alioquin* schort, 117^a where, if thei were wel leernyd in gramer, thei wolden seie *alioquin* long. Loke alle men where¹ the electuari, which Nicholas the phisisien in his Antitodari callith catholicon, is callid so for that it is orthodoxe, or for that it is universal. And loke also alle men, whether the book of Januense in gramer upon the iiii parties of gramer, is called catholicon, for that it is orthodoxe, or for that it is universal, and thanne lete alle hem be schamed, or at the leest lete hem amende her ignoraunce, whiche clepen the chirche or feith catholik, for that it is orthodoxe or trewe, and not for that it is universal or general.

¹ *i.e.* whether.

CHAPTER V

FADIR, may the clergie, or al the hool chirche in erthe, make of the newe eny article to be feith, which was not bifore feith in it silf.

Sone, y wolde thou forȝatist not what is tauȝt in the first parti of *The folower to the Donet*, the xi^e c^r., hou that feith is takun in ii maners. In oo¹ maner, the knowing, bi which we knowen 117^b the trewe article, is clepid feith, and this maner of taking feith is propre. In an other maner, the same trewe article, in it silf knowen bi feith now seid in the first maner, is clepid also feith; but this secunde maner of cleeping, thouȝ it be ofte usid, it is an unpropir maner of cleping. Ensaumple herof is this. The knowing, with which y knowe that Marie conseived Crist in her maydenhode, is feith in the first maner of speche; and the same treuthe or article now rehercid and bileeved, which is this, Marie conceyved Crist in her maydenhode, is feith in the

¹ So in MS.

ii^e maner of speche. And in¹ lijk maner, ech other article bileeved is woned to be clepid feith. Thane ferther thus. Ever either of these seid maners may be departid in twey other maners. Forwhi as it apperith bi the chapiter in the first parti of *The folewer to the Donet*, the knowing wherynne y consent in myn undirstonding to
 118a a treuthe, beyng above oure capacite to knowe, save bi therof Goddis affermyng or reveling, is feith. And also the knowing, wherynne y consente in myn undirstonding to a treuthe, not bi my resouns fynding, but bi this, that a creature, which for good evydencis y trowe not thereynne to lie, it affeermede, is feith. And so the comoun speche usith to seie; y gave credence to him; he is a credible man; and so forth of othere spechis lijk. Wherefore it folowith bi strengthe of the first particioun now bifore seid, that answeringly to these now last seid membris, the article or the treuthe knowun bi the first membre of this laste particioun, is feith, and the article or treuthe knowun bi the ii^e membre of this particioun is also seid feith.

Fadir, the particiouns or departingis of feith y conceyve wel, and y take, and comprehende hem sufficientli in my witt, and in my mynde.

¹ Almost completely pared off from the margin where it is set as a correction.

Wel, sone, thanne ferther thus. Take thou
thilk feith which is a knowing, wherynne we 118b
consenten in oure undirstonding to a treuthe,
being above our capacite to fynde and knowe,
and therfore we knowen it bi this, that God it
affeermyd, and take thou the feith, which is
the article or the treuthe in this now seid
maner knowun; and certis never neither of these
ii feithis the clergie, or the hool chirche, may
make of the newe, at his owne wil. Forwhi,
it is not in the power of the clergie, neither
in the power of the hool chirche, forto make
such an article to be trewe, or to be untrewe;
as it is not in the chirchis power forto make
this to be trewe or to be untrewe, that Marie
conceyvyd a child in her maydenhode, or this,
that Crist was deed, and roos azen into lijf,
and so forth of othere articlis of feith in this
seid maner and kinde. And therfore it that
al the clergie, or the hool chirche, may do her
about, is denouncing, and declaring, and deter-
myning to the sympler party of the chirche
what is in ever either of these now last seid 119a
maners, and that this is to be take for such
feith, and that this other is to be take for
such seid feith, and so forth of other lijk; but
alle wise men mowe soone se that fer is this
fro power to make eny thing be such seid

feith. And, that the chirche makith not a thing to be such feith in this, that he decreeth, discerneth, iugith, determyneth, and witnessith, and publischith a thing to be such a feith, resoun wole that the wiser parti of al the hool multitude of Cristen men take upon hem, forto teche and enfoorme auctoritativeli the simpler parti which thing ouzte be take for feith, and which not, and that into greet alizting and esiyng and suring to the simpler parti, and so doith the clergie to the lay parti. And of more strengthe than this is, y se not that the determynacioun of the chirche is. But, azenward, take thou feith which is the knowyng, wherynne
 1196 we consenten in oure undirstonding to a treuthe which we fynden not in oure resonyng, otherwise than for a creature, which, for sufficient evydencis, we trowen not therynne to lie, it affeermyde; and take thou the same treuthe so of us trowid and bileeved, which also is feith, and ever either of these feithis may be maad of newe of the clergie. Forwhi, the clergie may make now first a fastyng day, and an hali day, which never weren bifore. And of this making, and ordinance, risen up these ii trouthis, which never were bifore: this daie is to be fastid, and this day is to be halowid. Now manye of the symple people mowe learne these ii trouthis of the clergie,

that is to seie, thei mowe learne, and knowe that this day is to be fastid, and this day is to be halowid; whilis thei witen not whi, save for this, that the clergie seien so and affeermen so to hem, and therfore it is in the power of the clergie to make into hem such feith as is now seid.

Fadir, this maner of feith whiche the chirche may make, is of noon other kinde but as ¹²⁰² is the credence or feith which ech housholder may make to hise 3onge children, and to hise rude and symple hynes, and to hise hondmaydens, and boond men not myche witti to resone; and therfore these feithis whiche the clergie may make, ben fer from the hiznes and worthines of feithis, which God to us makith. And therfore, fadir, lete us speke her aftir, as we han spoken bifore, of tho feithis whiche we han bi affermyng of God, for suche ben algatis necessarie to oure helpe.

Sone, y assente wel that we schulen so speke, and therfore aske therof what thou wolte.

Fadir, y aske this. Owith the clergie, or the chirche bileeve as feith eny article which is not expressid in the litteral sense or undirstonding of Holi Scripture, and which is not folowing out of eny article in Holi Scripture, but if he have forto it bileeve and trowe bi this argument:—

what ever God affermed or schewid or revelid
 120*b* is trewe; this article God affermyd, or revelid;
 wherfore this article is trewe? And but if he
 have sufficient evydence for treuthe of the ii^e
 premysse, as bi such an argument:—what ever
 the apostlis or othere undoutabili trewe heerers
 of God, or sum undoutable myracle, or sum
 undou3table inspiracioun, or sum undoutable ap-
 pering withoute forth, or withynne forth, to eny
 persooone, or sum longe uce of bileevyng in the
 chirche without eny bigynnyng, knewen therof
 witnessid God it affermed, revelid or schewid,¹
 so it is that the apostlis, or sum other un-
 doutable credible heerer of God, or sum undout-
 able myracle, or sum undoutable inspiracioun,
 or sum undoutable appering withynne forth,
 or without forth, or sum such seid longe
 uce of bileevyng in the chirche witnessid
 that God affermyd, or revelid this article,
 wherfore treuthe is that God affermyd thilk
 same article. And 3itt ferther, upon the ii^e now
 121*a* seid premysse, he muste have notabili likli evy-
 dencis in argument, and so likli, that to the
 contrarie is not hadde, neither hopid to be

¹The MS. seems confused here, reading 'God to have affermyd or revelid or schewid,' and adding the clause 'God it affermed revelid or schewid' on the margin without erasing the erroneous words.

hadde, eny evydence so likli. And sotheli, sone, as may ful openli be deducid, if al what is seid of feith in the first parti of *The folewer to the Donet*, and in this present book, be weel takun, undirstonden, and comprehendid, what ever article the clergie, or the hool chirche bileeveth as feith, and hath not, upon the same article, this now seid processe of evydence, and of proof, he in so bileevyng is over hasti, and usurpith, and presumeth ferther than he schulde. And upon what ever article the clergie can have the seid processe of proof, it the clergie may bileeve as feith without perel; and if the clergie have such a preef, as now is ensaumplid, upon sum article not writen openli in Holi Scripture, neither folowingli out of eny article so writen, the chirche so hath upon these trouthis, that this holi lyver after his deeth is acceptid into salvacioun, and to be reverencid, and wor- 1216 schipid, and folowid as for a savyd soule, and moche lovyd and worschipid of God, and so of manye martiris, confessouris, and virginis, othere and dyverse fro the persoonys of the apostlis, the chirche hath the now seid proof, and that bi helpe of myraclis, wel tried and examyned bi sufficient trewe witnessing, or bi open at fulle schewing. Thou3 the chirche nedith not seche such helpe of myraclis for the apostilis to be doon, and

that bicause Crist seid to hem thus, Luk. c^r. 10 :
Ioie and be 3e glad, for 3oure names ben write in hevenes. And thanne therof folowith this to be take for an article of feith—Thomas of Cantilbiri is a seint; Joon of Bridlington is a seint, in the seid dew undirstonding of this word seynt, and so forth of othere, whos lyvyng, and for whom the myraclis doon ben weel examyned, and tried bi witnessis sworne; notwithstanding
 122a that pretense myraclis, and pretense inspiraciouns, and pretense appeeringis of God, or of aungels, withynne forth, and without forth, and legendis or lyves of seyntis, and othere stories whiche ben writen and hadde in fame, ben ful slider and unsure groundis, forto grounde upon hem feith, that is to seie a treuthe passing nature and revelid bi God, without passing greet trial of hem. Forwhi, certis among hem a diligent wise ensercher schal fynde, sumtyme superstitiouns, sumtyme errouris azens sure knownen trouthe, sumtyme heresies azens the feith, and sumtyme contrariete bitwie¹ hem silf, as forto putte out in special where and hou oft, it were over longe here. And therefore, thouȝ the chirche suffre manye suche to renne forth, and be redde, and be takun as wise men wole iuge and fele of hem, the chirche is not so hasty forto determyne

¹ So in MS.

autoritativeli hem to be trewe. Nevertheles, al
tho which the chirche takith into greet and 122b
perfizt examinacioun, and theraftir iugith, and
decreeth, and determyneth autentikli to be trewe,
ben nedis to be take for trewe, in lasse than
sufficient proof be made into the contrarie, and
unto tyme thilk proof be maad and knowe,
as y seid bifore in the vii^e c^r. of the first parti
of this book.

But 3itt, that the apostlis bitoken not, out and
bisidis Holi Scripture, eny articlis unwriten to be
bileeved for necessarie feithis, thou3 summe men so
comounli holden, y may argue bi ri3t notable
evydencis, of whiche the firste is this. The
apostlis bitoken not to Cristen men eny articlis
to be bileeved as such seid feith, bi eny such wey
whiche the apostlis knewen to be no spedeful and
sufficient wey, forto in it bitake eny articlis to be
bileeved as so greet feith; but so it is that
the apostlis knewen wel, that to bitake to the
heering and mynde of the peple oonli, without 123a
writing, eny such articlis forto be of hem bileeved,
was no spedeful and sufficient wey; wherfore the
apostlis not so bitoken. The ii^e premysse of this
argument may in this wise be proved. Thilke wey
was wel knowun, considerid, and aspiid to be
insufficient and unspedeful, which was bi the
apostlis remedied, and left, and leid aside; but so

it was, that this seid wey forto delyvere eny articlis as such feith to the peple, bi heering and mynde oonli, without writing, was left, and leid aside, and remedied bi this, that thei wroten the gospels and epistlis to the peple. Forwhi, ellis thei hadden no sufficient cause for to so write, and Luk in his prolog into hise gospel meneth the same; wherfore it folowith that the seid wey was weel knowun, and considerid, and aspied, to be insufficient for the seid entent to be sufficientli sped. Also the seid

123^b ii^e premysse may be proved thus. The apostlis, made so wise bi the Holi Goost forto overse and knowe scripturis of the Oold Testament, myzte soone knowe and remembre hou that manye trouthis Adam seide and tauzte to hise sones and his ofspring, over it that is writen in the Bible, wherof no man in the tyme of apostlis couthe eny thing seie, and in lijk maner it was knowun of the apostlis to be trewe that Noe and Abraham seiden and tauzten manye trouthis to her herers, not writen, whiche no man couthe reherce in tyme of the apostlis, and al for that thei were not writen. And in lijk maner it was trewe of David, and of Salomon, anentis her heerers, so that noon of her wordis ben knowun than¹ tho that ben writen. And if we wolen come neer hoom, Joon

124^a the evangelist seith, in the last c^r. of his gospel,

¹ On margin, 'thanne.'

that mo myraclis Crist dide than ben writen in this book, which, if thei weren writen, al the world, thouȝ it were turned into bokis, schulde not take and comprehende; and ȝitt of alle tho myraclis not writen in the gospels, not oon is of us now knowun. Wherefore it folowith that so wys men as weren the apostlis in goostli necessarie maters, and so fulfillid with the Holi Goost, and also wel putte into good avisis bi ful witti clerkis convertid into Cristen feith, knewen wel that this weie forto delyvere necessarie feith to peplis, bi word, and heering, and mynde oonly, without therof the writing, was insufficient to the peple. The ii^e evydence is this. If the apostlis hadden lete renne eny articlis undir necessarie feith to be bileeved, without therof the scripture, this entent and dede of the apostlis schulde have be better knowen and holden of the chirche, which was in tyme of greet Constantyne the emperour, than of 124b eny chirche being aftir tho seid daies. But so it was that the chirche in the daies of Constantyne helde not, trowid not, and considerid not, that the apostlis so left without writing eny articlis to be takun as necessarie feith, wherefore no chirche aftir the daies of Constantyne owith so holde. The ii^e premysse y may prove thus. In the daies of the greet and first Constantyne, emperour, ther was maad an universal counceil of al Cristen in

Nice of Bityne, in which universal counceil weren gaderid the Latyn clerkis, and the Greek cleerkis togider, for this entent principali, to declare the trewe feith in the article upon which Arri erride, and folowingli forto putte out, in an expresse crede, the substancial pointis and articlis of our feith, as is open in the stories clepid *Ecclesiastik Storie*, and *Tripartid Stori*, or ellis thus, *the chirchis stori*, and *the iii departid storie*, whiche stories ben
 125^a the worthiest and moost credible of eny other, save the Bible. And therfore, so thei dide, and made a crede which in the seid ii bokis is writen, but so it muste nedis have be that, if the chirche in tho daies hadde knowun, or trowid that the apostlis hadde delyvered to the peple eny articlis, undir heering and mynde oonli, the chirche in thilk seid general counseil, gaderid forto point and articlee¹ maters of our feith, wolden rather have sette forth, in writing of the crede thanne maad, tho seid articlis which the apostlis left out of writing, than tho of whom expresse mensioun is maad in the writing of the apostlis. And that for as myche as to the more nede, remedie is rather to be 3ovun, than to the lasse nede. And the nede to putte tho articlis undir writing was ful greet, as schal soone afir appere. Wherefore, the chirche than gaderid hadde no conceite that the

¹ So in MS.

apostlis leften eny suche articlis of necessarie feith, whiche the apostlis not wroten. And, in liik maner, as it was in the first seid general counseil ^{125b} of Nice that thei pointiden out of articlis of bileeve to alle Cristen peple into a foorme of a crede, so dide another greet general counceil aftir, at Constantynopil, and manye othere provincial counceilis, as apperith in the book clepid Decrees of counceils, rehercen the ii now seid credis, and in noon of hem, so making and pointing articlis of oure feith in her credis, is mensioun maad of eny article tauzt bi the apostlis out of Scripture. The iii^e evydence is this. If eny articlis schulde be lefte to peple fro the apostlis, undir heering and mynde, to be holde and bileeved of the peple greet as feith, these pointis and articlis schulde be tho rather than othere, or as soone as othere:— that is to seie, we schulen preie toward the eest; we schulen blesse us with a cros; preestis schulen make thre foold crossis upon the breed and wijne offride in the auter, bifore the consecracioun; the font of baptyem schal be blessid with oile, and baptisid persoonys schulen be anointid with oil. ^{126a} But so it is that ech of these seid governauncis takun her bigynnyng and ordynaunce of our fadris oonli, not the apostlis, bi a chapter of holi Basile, in the Summe of Gracian, d. xi^e c. Ecclesiasticarum. And in the same wise it is to be demed

of holi water, whom Alisaunder the first and Pope ordeynyd, and of holi breed, and of the moost party of observauncis in the masse, and of the fast in lent, and of manye othere suche observauncis, whom alle holi fadris sithen the apostlis ordeyneden, as it appeerith bi open witnessing of writingis ; wherfore it is not to be holde that eny other observauncis or articlis, dyvers fro these now rehersed, the apostlis bitoke withoute writing, to be kept and to be bileevyd as such seid greet feith. Also holi Basile, in the now bifore alleggid c^r. in the Summe of Gracian, d. xi^e c. Ecclesiasticarum, departith tho thingis which alle Cristen owen to holde and to bileeve, into thre membris, 1266 that is to seie, into tho thingis, pointis, or articlis, whiche to us leeveth and bitakith apostolik ordynaunce, that is to seie, ordinaunce of a pope or of popis, and whiche to us bitakith Holi Scripture, and whiche to us bitakith devoute uce, chosen of the more part of the peple. Wherfore, holi Basil conceyvyd no mo membris than these iii to be nedisli takun and kept of Cristen peple. And thanne folowith that he conceyvyd not suche a fourthe membre to be takun and kept of the peple, that is to seie, whiche the apostlis tauzten, and leften, and bitoken for substancial feith, without writing. And that, bi the first now rehersed membre, Basil undirstode popis ordy-

nauncis, it is likli herfore. Forwhi, the ordinauncis of popis ben ful famose, and more famose, and of more reverence, and more attendaunce in the comoun peple, than is the custom and usage of the comoun peple, or, at the leest, of and even so myche; wherfore it is likli that Basil left not popis ordynauncis unspokun of, in his particioun bifore seid, but open it is that he speke not of ^{127a} popis ordynauncis, but if he spake therof in the first membre of the seid particioun, wherfore it is trewe that he so spak.

And so, fynali forto sie into the principal entent of this present chapiter, y am not ware that the chirche techith or delyvereth eny thing to be such seid catholik feith, as a treuthe doon or tauzt in the tyme of Crist, or of the apostlis, except it which is conteynynd expresseli in the writing of the Newe Testament, or folowing thereof in formal¹ argument. If eny other man kan remembre him of othere or of mo, wel be it; but zitt thingis doon or tauzt longe aftir tyme of the apostlis, the chirche may determyne for such seid feith, thouz not as a treuthe doon, or tauzt, and revelid bi God in the tyme of Crist or of the apostlis, but latir ^{127b} aftir the tyme of Crist, and of the apostlis. Amonge whiche thingis declarid bi the chirche for feith, not conteynynd expresseli or inpresseli in

¹ MS. 'informal.'

Holi Scripture, if eny such be, y remembre me now of noon, save of it what is here bifore seid in this present c^r., longing to the cananyng of seintis. And that if eny such be, which condicioun y seie for peraventure,¹ it may be holde and undirstonde weel that the chirche entendith not forto decree, and determyne, and publisch this to be an article of such seid feith: Thomas of Cantilibri is a seynt; Johnne of Bridlington is a seynt; Ambrose is a seynt, and so of other lijk dyverse fro Marie and fro the apostlis in the newe testament: but that the chirche admyttith and allowith hem to be holde, and worschipid, and folowid for seintis, in al or in myche thing tauzt or doon bi hem, and ellis peple schulde not counseli so do, as the chirche decreeth not, or determyneth not, neither publischith the writingis
 128a of Ambrose, of Jerom, of Austyn, to be trewe; but admittith hem to be take in uce of studyng, and of reding, and heering, with fredom to feele of hem as evydencis mowe resonabili and sufficientli move in tyme comyng, whiche writingis schulden not ellis boldeli and counseli be take into suche studyng, reding, and heering, as thei now ben take, ne were the seid admissioun doon upon hem

¹The punctuation here may be mistaken. The sentence is one of Pecock's characteristically involved periods, and I have found difficulty in hitting his precise sense.

bi the chirche. Even as the chirche repellith and weerneth the writingis of sum othere writers to be take into uce of reding and heering courseli. Of which bothe dedis doon bi pope Gelasi, mensioun is maad in the Summe of Gracian, d. xv^e c^r. Sancta Romana. And therfore, thouȝ y wole not exclude fro sumwhat helping into the grounding of feith, myraclis, and revelaciounis, and long uce of bileevyng in the chirche, namelich which may be in long use of undirstonding, thus or thus, Holi Scripture as for his litteral sense, ȝitt thei ben ech 1286
ful feble in himsilf forto founde the seid feith, but if he be sufficientli proved and tried. And ferthermore, it semeth that the apostlis entendiden not forto ȝeve eny catholik feith, necessarie to Cristen mennys savacioun, bi word oonli to be kept in uce, without writing and remembraunce.

And so, bi al that is writen fro the bigynnyng of this present chapter hidirto, it semeth that the clergie ouȝte not induce, or constreyne the othere peplein to bileeve and feith of other pointis and articlis, as upon the feith of whom is hanging oure salvacioun, than ben expressid in the litteral sense of Holi Scripture, or folowing of hem so expressid.

O fadir, y am myche delitid in ȝoure so wise and depe forth leeding of the seid now bifore goyng profis. Nevertheles, y truste so moche in ȝoure to me good fadirhood, that ȝe wole suffre me

make aȝens ȝoure doctrine this now to folowe
 129^a obiaccioun. Oon of the best clerkis and wisist
 divinis, and clepid therfore the Doctour Sutel, seith
 in his writing, that this article—Crist in his deeth
 of bodi descendid into hellis¹—is an article of
 necessarie feith; and that, for as myche as it is
 putte in the comoun crede, which crede is ascrivid
 to have be made of the apostlis; and ȝitt this
 same article, as he seith, is not groundid in Holi
 Scripture. Wherefore ȝoure doctryne stondith not,
 if this doctour was not in his now seid sentence
 bigilid.

O sone, he berith him ful wel which is never
 bigilid, namelich if he write myche or teche myche;
 for as holi scripture seith: 2

In myche speche defaute is not absent. But that
 the seid doctour was in his conceit bigilid, lo y
 may schewe thus. In the tyme of Austyn, and
 of othere holi clerkis aboute Austyns tyme, the
 comune crede hadde not withynne him this
 seid article—Crist in his deeth of bodi descendid
 to hellis, as y prove in *The book of feith* in latyn.
 129^b And no man may seie that the apostlis settiden
 thilk article in the comoun crede, a this side the
 daies of Austyn³; wherefore, nedis it is trewe
 that neither bifore, neither aftir Austyns daies,

¹ So in MS.

² No reference given.

³ A marginal correction of 'apostlis' in the text.

the apostlis settiden thilk article into the comoun crede. And so the ground, foundement, and cause, whi the seid doctour helde the seid article to be a feith, is not trewe, that is to seie, that the apostlis puttiden thilk article into the comoun crede. And that the chirche may make noon such article of feith, is bfore schewid in of this present chapter, the forheed. That in the tyme of Austyn, and of othere holi fadris aboute Austyns tyme, the comoun crede hadde not this seid article, it is open bi dyverse and manye omelies and expositiouns, which Austyn and the othere seid fadris maden, expownyng the comoun crede, in her daies rennyng, and that fro article to article, bi and bi, fro the first unto the last, and thei leeven unspokun of the now seid article ; and also thei overleepen this article.

* * * *

At this point the MS. ends. We know from an earlier reference that there were at least two chapters more, concerned with the creed; and there seems some justification for Babington's conjecture (Represser, p. xliii.) that 'the great English creed,' to which Gascoigne refers, formed the conclusion of the book.

GLOSSARY

Amovyð, stirred, set in action.
 anentis, concerning.
 antitodari (*i.e.* antidotary), title
 of medical treatise describing
 antidotes.
 apprising, appreciation.
 arere, rouse.
 arumme, far from.
 assaie (used as noun).
 autentikli, authentically.
 avisid, advised.
 azenbie, redeem.
 azenstonde, withstand.

Baptim or baptym, baptism.
 bese, to concern oneself with.
 bigam, one guilty of bigamy.
 bireweable, to be regretted.
 bitakun, entrusted.
 breed, bread.
 brennyng, burning.

Cacche, catch.
 cananyising, canonising.
 clepid, called.
 comberose, cumbersome.
 contrarie, to oppose.
 coostis, coasts.
 courseli, in due course.
 couthen, knew.
 crokiden, erred from the way.

culum, dove.

Deel, grief.
 delid, dealt.
 demeritorie, unworthy.
 denounce, proclaim.
 dialogazacioun, disputation.
 digne, worthy.
 Donet, grammar, primer.
 dressing, guidance.
 dukis, leaders.

Evereither, both.
 expowner, expositor.

Fantasiën, wildly imagine.
 fillen, fell.
 foundement, foundation.

Gendring, creating, causing.
 glose, gloss.
 goostli, spiritual.
 govun, given.
 gropiden, groped.
 groundeli, fundamentally.

Hild, shed, incline towards.
 hool, whole.
 hynes, servants.

Ierarchiing, ruling (of ecclesiastical rule).

inconvenient, obstacle.
izen, eyes.

Kindeli, by nature.
knowlechen, acknowledge.
kunnyng, knowledge.
kunnyngal, having to do with
knowledge.

Laife, lay fee ; the laity.
lauzed, laughed.
leefir, rather.
leefulli, lawfully.
lesingis, lies.
ligge, lie.
lijk, like.
lougest, lowest.

Mawle, male.
medid, rewarded.
meene, instrument, medium.
meirs, mayors.
mowe, to be able.
myir, mire.

Namelich, especially.
nedeable, able to be compelled.
nedisli, of necessity.
neische, soft.
neizeth, approaches.
netherte, inferiority.
nycromancie, necromancy.
nyle, will not.

Obeischaunce, reverence.
omelie, homely.
oon, oonyng ; one, union.
ordynatli, in order.
overte, superiority.
owen, ought.

Pacches, patches.
parcelmele, by sections.
parchimyn, parchment.
paske, passover.
predicamentis, categories.
preef, proof.
preise, praise.
puplischid, published.

Rad, read.
reclaimed, opposed.
roos, rose.

Sad, sober.
schap, schope ; make, made.
schenden, put to shame.
sciential, connected with true
or full knowledge.
seie, say.
seriauntis, sergeants at law.
siker, sure.
sithis, occasions.
skilis, reasons.
sleizte, cunning.
slider, slippery, uncertain.
smatche, taste.
sotheli, truly.
sownyng, connected with, tend-
ing to.
sowrdou3, leaven.
spice, kind, variety.
squaymose, delicate.
stideli, steadily.
stidis, places, varieties.
stie, ascend.
stirte, start.
storial, historic.
streizte, stretched.
suer, pursuer.

Tikil (like squaymose), delicate
or difficult.

transumed (?), a doubtful word,
probably from a scribal error.

Trenys, Lamentations (Book of).
treythe, thirtieth.

Unazenseiabili, unanswerably.

unbigiling, undeceiving.

undepartabili, inseparably.

undirfongen, received.

undisputte, set under.

unhadde, not possessed.

unnethis, in spite of.

unobeiers, disobeyers.

unproved, disproved.

unwist, unknown.

Vaile, value.

verri, actual.

viciose, vicious.

Waast, waste.

waisching, washing.

weerne, prevent, forbid.

weiyng, weighing.

wepeable, to be lamented.

wexiden, waxed.

widewite, widowhood.

wijne, wine.

wirching, working.

wite, wote ; know, knew.

woned, accustomed.

Ynouz, enough.

yvel, evil.

zede, went.

zeeris, years.

zocke, yoke.

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